DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 326 284 JC 910 018

AUTHOR	Roueche, Susanne D., Ed.
TITLE	Innovation Abstracts: Volume XII, Numbers 1-30, 1990.
INSTITUTION	Texas Univ., Austin. National Inst. for Staff and Organizational Development.
SPONS AGENCY	Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek, Mich.; Richardson (Sid W.) Foundation, Fort Worth, Tex.
REPORT NO	ISSN-0199-106X
PUB DATE	90
NOTE	62p.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT	Innovation Abstracts; v12 n1-30 1990
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*College Faculty; *College Instruction; *Community Colleges; Faculty Development; Instructional Development; Instructional Improvement; *Instructional Innovation; *Learning Strategies; *Teacher Effectiveness; Teaching Methods; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

This series of one- to two-page abstracts highlights a variety of innovative approaches to teaching and learning in the community college. Topics covered in the abstracts include: (1) academic partnerships pairing "high-risk" students with a concerned faculty member, counselor, or administrator; (2) teacher-to-teacher learning partnerships; (3) writing across the curriculum; (4) student-directed learning; (5) staff development; (6) English as a second language; (7) sail training; (8) a teaching/learning project utilizing writing assignments; (9) essay tests; (10) team-testing; (11) motivating students; (12) the executive control processes in student learning; (13) motivating Adult Basic Education students to develop reading skills; (14) biology exam preparation; (15) college weight loss programs; (16) use of written evaluations of class by students throughout the semester; (17) student goal setting; (18) gender and racial balancing of course content; (19) speech instruction; (20) creative strategies for algebra class; (21) student recruitment; (22) teacher evaluation; (23) collaborative publishing; (24) faculty and staff orientation; (25) encouraging student participation in learning; (26) non-aggressive martial arts techniques and Taoist philosophy in conflict resolution classes; (27) low-light classroom situations (during audio-visual instruction) and student participation; (28) creating enthusiasm in the classroom; (29) peer tutors; (30) developing reasoning abilities; (31) internationalizing the curriculum; (32) test feedback and the learning process; (33) a video series on exceptional teaching techniques; (34) ethics in accounting courses; (35) student journals; (36) building community through research projects; (37) special project support for distinguished teachers; (38) "breaking the ice" on the first day of class; (39) students reading aloud in class; (40) art to accompanying textual literary excerpts; (41) writing assignments in technology courses; (42) visual and acoustic aids (music and art) in the philosophy classroom; and (43) ethics in higher education. (GFW)

ED326284

Innovation Abstracts: Volume XII, Numbers 1-30

1990

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

Published by the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development,
The University of Texas at Austin with Support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation
and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Rouche

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD)
Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin
EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

JC 910 018

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 1

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Academic Partnership Program

The Academic Partnership Program is designed to pair students identified as "high-risk"—that is, not likely to survive even the first semester at school—with a concerned and knowledgeable faculty member, counselor, or administrator. These Academic Partners meet weekly to discuss the student's academic progress and to help the student survive the term by providing encouragement and support.

Each faculty member, counselor, or administrator is assigned 1-3 students per semester.

Assignments are based on (1) input from students who volunteer for the program and (2) faculty members participating in the program. Once assignments are made, the faculty Academic Partner contacts the student and sets up the first meeting.

Meetings are informal, can be held anywhere on campus, and follow these guidelines:

1. The initial meeting serves as a welcoming session and get-acquainted meeting.
2. The second and possibly third meetings include an orientation by the faculty Academic Partner to the school, encompassing a detailed look at the services available to the student. This orientation is more than a "here-is-what-we-got" session. It includes a description of services available to the student and a look at ways the student can make use of these services. This part of the program is vital and may require more than one meeting. An excellent resource is the Student Orientation Guide which each student receives when he/she goes through orientation. The section on "Campus Services" provides an excellent starting point for mentoring.
3. The next two meetings afford the faculty partner a chance to discuss the student's educational and occupational goals and give him/her the opportunity to display appropriate concern and guidance regarding these goals.
4. Discussions during subsequent meetings can reflect the concerns of both partners. For instance, if the student is having a problem with financial aid, or registration, or any other campus service, he/she is encouraged to call upon the faculty partner for assistance in resolving it. One of the most important roles the faculty partner can play is to act as a liaison between students and campus services, reducing the frustration and confusion in dealing with the bureaucracy (to which we may be accustomed, but which is difficult for incoming students to appreciate).

Other concerns might revolve around various sections of the Student Orientation Guide. While there is an abundance of useful information in this guide, a partner could work with students to identify the most critical information included there.

Fundamentally, the faculty partner focuses on student academic performance and concentrates on ways to ensure that the student is succeeding in class. Therefore, discussions may focus upon how the student is performing in each class, what problems the student is facing, and how these problems can be alleviated, from learning better study techniques to joining study groups to enrolling in tutoring sessions. These discussions might identify social, academic, or personal problems which could be interfering with student progress.

The range of these discussions is virtually limitless, although they should exclude areas encompassing academic advising, course programming, and personal counseling. Faculty partners can refer the student to appropriate services on campus, should concerns in these areas surface. Otherwise, the discussions are guided by the perceptions and acumen of the faculty partner.

In addition to meeting with students, faculty partners contact their students' instructors at appropriate times during the semester to determine each student's progress. This progress, or lack of it, may serve as a springboard for corrective action.

The goal of discussions between Academic Partners is the goal of the program itself: to make the semester a successful one for each student involved.

William E. Broderick, *Professor, Reading*

For further information, contact the author at Cerritos Community College District, 11110 E. Alondra Boulevard, Norwalk, CA 90650.

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD)
Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin
EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

Vitality in Motion: Teachers Helping Teachers

What are a computer instructor, accounting instructor, and biology teacher doing in the newborn nursery in a local hospital? Why is a history teacher sitting in a health careers class? Actually, they are teaching techniques as they watch colleagues interacting with students. Why? They are participating in a unique learning opportunity at McLennan Community College called Vitality in Motion (VIM).

What is VIM?

VIM is a program whose purpose is, ultimately, to increase student learning by increasing faculty teaching skills. It is based on the belief that the best place to learn about teaching and learning is in the classroom itself. Participants in the program attend each other's classes or the classes of other instructors each week. Using these classes as labs, they then meet once a week in a seminar to examine common classroom situations and share possible ideas.

Membership in the group is open to full-time and part-time faculty and counselors. Emphasis is placed on having a heterogeneous mixture of participants representing many areas of instruction.

What Are the Objectives?

—To share teaching approaches
—To examine the art (craft) and science of teaching
—To help faculty develop long-term multidisciplinary interactions between faculty members

What Is Required?

1. Attend a weekly, 2- to 2½-hour seminar.
2. Attend a demonstration class each week.
3. Allow participants to observe your classes, take notes, and offer a critique.
4. Prepare a presentation on some aspect of teaching to give to participants during a weekly seminar.
5. Have a short segment of your classroom teaching videotaped for your own review.
6. Participate in the evaluation of the program.
7. Be committed for one full semester.

Each week, we were required to attend the class of a fellow participant and evaluate the teaching techniques and classroom management strategies. Once a week, we met for two hours in a seminar and evaluated the observations for the previous week. These evaluations led to discussions concerning problems that occur in the classroom. Participants offered suggestions and strategies that had worked for them.

Another part of the seminar included a prepared presentation from a member of the group, followed again by group discussion. Topics included course syllabi, computer techniques, stress management, and critical thinking and reading skills.

At some point during the semester, we were required to videotape one of our classes. These tapes enabled us to see *how* and *what* our students see as we conduct our classes. We were not required to share our tapes with the group: They were for our eyes only!

Evaluation

Through participation in the VIM program, we learned some new teaching strategies, saw what other disciplines were doing across campus, discussed classroom problems and methods of coping with them, and formed new friendships and reinforced old ones.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future VIM groups include developing a formal classroom observation instrument which each participant could use to critique each visit and then give to the observed instructor as soon after the visit as possible. Sometimes things said in private and in anonymity can be both complimentary and critical.

We also recommend that the seminars be held in a room with a large table, overhead projector, and chalkboard. Refreshments should be available to help promote a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

Conclusions

The VIM program serves an important function in the quality of instruction on our campus. The business world requires rigorous quality control of its product. This program is one method of quality control. The open critique and the interaction of our members become our best guards against mediocrity.

Here at MCC, it's perfectly natural for a history teacher to be in a health careers class and for a computer whiz, an accountant, and a biologist to be in a newborn nursery. We are using the entire campus as a lab to help us to put vitality into our teaching. We are truly a vital campus in motion!

Dorothea Lanoux, *Facilitator, Vitality in Motion*

For further information, contact the author at McLennan Community College, 1400 College Drive, Waco, TX 76708.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

January 19, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 1
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1989
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 2

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Writing Across the Curriculum: "What's In It for Me?"

Pragmatists say we should evaluate deeds, not words, and judge ideas by how they work, rather than by how well they look on paper.

Many sadder-but-wiser people have failed to follow this advice when considering the development of a writing-across-the-curriculum program. They learned the hard way what David Russel's research revealed: "Revival meeting or consciousness-raising efforts, however useful as springboards, cannot sustain interest after founders have gone...WAC must be part of an institution-wide plan with realistic goals and clear steps marked out toward them."

So, you ask, "What's the solution? How do we add writing across the curriculum without becoming composition teachers and burying ourselves in an avalanche of paper grading?"

The simple approach is often the best. I think Monroe County Community College (MCCC) has developed a program that works. And it works for everyone involved: students and faculty.

MCCC had the "useful springboards"—retreats, workshops, seminars. They were interesting and helpful, but not absolutely necessary. These sessions encouraged faculty in the disciplines to develop non-graded, writing-to-learn activities. However, we have taken our WAC approach one important step beyond the workshop stage. When our instructors decide to transform the expressive, exploratory writing activities into transactional, graded writing, we offer them assistance. This, after all, is the part of the process that instructors find most frustrating—evaluating hastily prepared, poorly conceived, last-minute writing.

We have a way to improve the quality of instruction without placing a heavy burden on our faculty. We have no panacea, but we do offer valuable assistance at a crucial point in the writing process.

Writing Fellows Program

MCCC has brought the Writing Fellows program—which began a few years ago at Brown University—to our campus. Here, very briefly, is how it works.

We have an advanced composition class—open to only a few of our best students. These students, good writers before taking the class, spend a semester becoming better writers and becoming writing consultants for their fellow students. These writing fellows work in a writing center—available to all students in all courses on campus—and each is also assigned to work with students in one class across the disciplines. For this assigned class, our writing fellows look at the early drafts of students' themes. They take each paper home, prepare a written commentary, and meet with the student writer to discuss the first draft. After that, the student writer has the opportunity to revise the draft and submit both drafts and the writing fellows' commentary to the instructor. Everyone in the "fellowed" classes must participate.

Last semester our "fellowed" classes included: Nursing Seminar, Political Science, Geometrical Drafting, Engineering Physics, Organic Chemistry, Respiratory Therapy, Logic, Western Philosophy, Basic Music for Classroom Teachers, General Physics, Children's Literature, Speech, Exploring Teaching, Poetry and Drama, Art History, Sociology, and Psychology. The instructors for these classes knew they were getting a second draft that had received the attention of a capable and concerned student tutor. (Instructors for other classes were also encouraged to require students to take first drafts to the Writing Center.) At the end of the year, we surveyed the students and faculty involved with the Writing Fellows Program.

Evaluation: Students With Writing Fellows

More than 97 percent of these students found their work with the writing fellows to be helpful. When you consider that these students were required to do *more* than students might have done in past semesters (write two drafts of each paper and meet with their writing fellows to discuss each), the approval rate is encouraging.

Some of the comments from these surveys are revealing: "I was pleased to find at MCCC the individual attention given to the students." "It helps to get an unbiased opinion of one's work before the professor sees it." "It is helpful to know that I had somewhere to go to get help with questions and problems."

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD)
Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin
EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

Evaluation: Faculty Working With Writing Fellows

The faculty were pleased with the work of their writing fellows. Over 80 percent felt the papers they received were better than those submitted in comparable classes without a writing fellow. One faculty member summed it up: "Students are learning to focus on the complexities of the writing process. They are learning not to be content with one draft. More real learning is taking place."

Perhaps most noteworthy of all were the numerous comments by faculty who said they had initiated or expanded their use of writing solely because of the availability of the writing fellows. For example, one faculty member said: "Rarely have I required writing in this course. The two assignments this term were central to the goals of the course. I plan to make these assignments standard from now on. Regular daily writing will increase in all my classes."

Evaluation: Writing Fellows' Experiences

The writing fellows benefit the most—and they know it. Each writing fellow spends two hours a week in the writing center and is also assigned to work with up to 20 students in one course. At the end of the semester, each writing fellow receives a $200 fellowship grant. Frankly, if calculated on an hourly basis, the money is a small incentive. Other major incentives come in the form of academic credentials, campus recognition, and their own eagerness to learn and to help others learn. These students also enjoy working closely with faculty members.

In conclusion, if a faculty member or student on our campus wants to know "What's in it for me?" the answer is this: "We offer something for everyone." Faculty members are pleased that their students get feedback at an important time in the writing process, when it really matters—before a grade ends the process. Faculty are also delighted to know they will not be reading last-minute efforts. And, of course, students are wise enough to know that, even though this does not guarantee success, it does help them write the best paper they are capable of writing.

John Holladay, *Instructor, Humanities & Social Sciences*

For further information, contact the author at Monroe County Community College, 1555 South Raisinville Road, Monroe, MI 48161.

Celebrate!

Make your plans now to attend NISOD's twelfth annual **International Conference on Teaching Excellence** and **Conference of Administrators, May 20-23, 1990**, in Austin, Texas.

This NISOD conference will feature five preconference sessions and over 100 Master Teacher workshops, highlighted by keynote presentations. Sessions will focus on innovations in staff and faculty development, instructional strategies, new technologies, and retention.

Administrators' sessions on Monday and Tuesday will focus on contemporary leadership issues, such as managing change, partnerships, institutional culture and climate, professional development rewards and incentives, and institutional effectiveness measures.

General sessions will be held at the Hyatt Regency and Four Seasons hotels; the Conference of Administrators will be held at the Four Seasons.

For further information, contact Dr. Suanne D. Roueche, Director, NISOD, at the address at the bottom of this page.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

January 26, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 2
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 3

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Promoting Creativity for Student-Directed Learning

Faced with the opportunity of teaching a literature survey course that spanned readings from the Old Testament through Shakespeare, I realized that covering that material in a swiftly moving, six-week session could prove to be a daunting experience for both instructor and students. So I began mapping out a course that would rely heavily upon students taking charge of their own learning, that would be self-intensive, and that would allow the students some creativity options. I also realized that the course must not "burn out" students but, rather, must be a spur to future reading.

First I needed a broad overview; I settled on Norman Steinaker and M. Robert Bell's experiential taxonomy, using its sequence of steps: exposure, participation, identification, internalization, and dissemination.

The exposure, as an overview, came the first day when I introduced the syllabus. Subsequent exposures were enacted when I set up each of the three units; briefer exposure occurred when I set up each author.

The participation would take the form of small group work which allowed students to both examine an issue and to begin developing a trust and rapport with each other—another essential for this class.

Using critical guidelines that I introduced both early in the sessions and periodically throughout the readings, the students began to use the critical strategies to evaluate the literature and then to personalize those evaluations by drawing comparisons to current society.

These comparisons helped them to internalize the literature and began the process of making their motivation more intrinsic than extrinsic.

Finally, the process of dissemination would manifest itself in class discussions, papers, quizzes, and a craft option. The experiential taxonomy represented the overview; now I had to develop the concrete particulars.

Each unit of the course was precisely laid out (although we later had to review the plan to accommodate extended discussions). The first unit would cover samplings of Biblical pieces, Homer, Aeschylus, Euripides, Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Petronius, and Augustine. The second unit would lead us through "Song of Roland" and Dante. The third unit would contain Erasmus, Castiglione, Cervantes, and Shakespeare. The *Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces*, Vol. I, would serve as our text. I then added such details as a midterm, a final exam, weekly quizzes, and a component in which each student would lead the discussion for 20 minutes (discussions pertaining to the literature in the second half of the course).

The Critical Component

I recognized, as well, that these students would be excited about different readings, and I knew I needed a way to "tap" into that excitement. I decided that a crafts component would be able to do that. In the syllabus, then, each student would read a short critical paper, due early in the course. Instead of a second critical paper, due at course end, a student could opt to create some project. Those adept at writing might want to draft a satire or tell a story using the same style as a writer we had discussed. Others might want to draw, paint, sculpt, build, knit, or videotape. Others might want to use music in some manner to add depth to a reading. The students were free to interpret in any medium they selected, so long as they chose a reading from the text.

I felt the crafts component would intensify a student's reading. Each student would become aware of the overview of each text in the class; but each would then undertake a more studied, interpretative approach to specific passages—and that more studied approach would serve to highlight the entire text.

The interpretative component created much discussion out of class. Students congregated in the student lounge to discuss projects, to share impressions of passages and entire pieces. As a result, this discussion out of class inspired the in-class discussion. Students began using the text to support their interpretations, which were studied not from just a reader's point of view, but from a creator's—or at least, a re-creator's. The dissemination process, spurred by a chance to create, evidenced itself in several areas. Class test scores rose 23%. Normally quiet students began participating in all class discussions. The excitement of the students was carried into the halls after class.

At the final regular class meeting, each student introduced his or her project, explaining how the project was conceived and brought to completion. Student time spent on making the projects averaged between 18 and 20 hours, time which does not take into account the conceiving of the idea, the re-reading of passages, the additional research, and the gathering of materials.

Projects included a replica of the shield of Aeneas; an original music score combining a synthesizer, trumpet, and piano for a Biblical psalm; a cross-stitched banner interpreting elements of the Creation; two paintings illustrating the battle between Achilles and Hector and the death of Hector; an original poem that underscored the importance of dreams or dream-like visions within the scope of the course; a poster depicting and naming each piece in a full suit of armor; a cross-stitchery piece set within a handmade frame; and a watercolor set within a two-level matting.

These projects were then exhibited in the college's library and were appropriately tagged and titled. The local television station videotaped the exhibits a week later, using the music score as background for the report.

Evaluation

The success of this course, focused as it was on dissemination and creativity, was brought home to me through a conversation I had with a student's mother. She related that her son had never been much of a reader before the course but had begun to be a voracious reader of both primary and secondary texts.

What I learned from those course performances and subsequent post-course interviews was invaluable. Instructors may be surprised by the amount of intrinsic motivation generated when a course allows students freedom to research, create, and disseminate. Students feel more in charge of their own learning and feel comfortable with a format that allows them the opportunity to "show off" that learning in a creative fashion.

Instructors may want to determine in what ways they can make their classes more student-dissemination-oriented rather than lecturer-based. Small groups, student-led discussions, and open-ended options—such as the crafts option—will produce more students willing to explore and to create. Classes will move at a faster, more enlightening pace. Discussions will become more intensive, more reflective, and more encompassing. As well, test scores will reflect student success. A dissemination-oriented class also enlivens the instructor!

Ron Reed, *Instructor, English*

For further information, contact the author at Hazard Community College, Highway 15 South, One Community College Drive, Hazard, KY 41701-2402.

Dear Reader,

If you're a regular reader of *Innovation Abstracts*, you're probably also familiar with *Linkages*, another publication produced by the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD).

Linkages is a quarterly newsletter, designed to showcase the accomplishments of NISOD-member colleges. Material is drawn from original written pieces, as well as from news releases and other publications from NISOD members, non-member colleges and universities, and related organizations. Copies are sent in bulk to each member college; individual copies are mailed to our special subscribers.

The broad coverage of topics and concise format provide readers with a wealth of strategies to effectively meet the daily demands of higher education. Past issues have focused on such topics as articulation, business partnerships, community outreach efforts, enabling the disabled, international issues, basic education, minority concerns, older student programs, recruitment, rural issues, staff development, technical programs, wellness, and women's programs. New topics are regularly added as fresh concerns come to the forefront.

We invite you to send brief items of approximately 50-100 words describing the important issues on your campus and ways in which your institution is responding to those concerns. Although our format does not allow space for extended pieces and bylines—as are published in *Innovation Abstracts*—we will include the name and telephone number of a contact following each item.

We also welcome profiles of faculty, staff, or administrators who exemplify excellence on your campus—both the widely celebrated and the unsung hero.

Most of all, we want to convey the energy that sparks innovative responses to *your* institution's unique challenges.

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Susan Burneson
Associate Director, NISOD
Editor, *Linkages*

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

February 2, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 3
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 4

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Seeking Excellence? Ask the Staff—An Update

In an earlier *Innovation Abstracts* it was reported that the office personnel at Schoolcraft College had created a unique staff development program in which they met and shared ideas and made recommendations for the improvement of the college. Most of the recommendations were not about what others should do for them but about *what they wanted to do for themselves*. Those recommendations included: the development of an orientation program for new clerical employees, complete with a buddy system; the establishment of a job exchange program that would help them better understand the interrelationships of people and responsibilities of various offices; the development of a recognition system for clerical employees; and the development of a pad of college maps, helpful for locating classrooms and offices on campus. *All* of these recommendations were implemented at the college.

Soon afterward, a new group of staff members were selected and met to inject new ideas into the program. The program was divided into six different issues, with a subcommittee for each. Each subcommittee was given an animal name that identified it with its specific emphasis. For example:

Dolphin—"Communication and Learning to Express Yourself Well"
Eagle—"Hints to Help Employees Soar High in Job Performance"

Each subcommittee met periodically and discussed ideas relevant to its focus. The most outstanding ideas were sent back to the coordinating committee, which had continued to provide overall planning and coordination for the program. The coordinating committee then reviewed these ideas and forwarded them to their respective areas of responsibility. Some of the recommendations that were implemented include:

1. conducting workshops on telephone etiquette and speaking before groups;
2. creating special sections of computer classes for college employees at convenient times;
3. creating a "Did You Know?" tablet sent to each office for the convenience of writing a message or announcement;
4. creating an incentive program for perfect attendance (Each employee is given a specific number of sick days and personal use days. The subcommittee suggested a reward, such as tickets to a college dinner dance or dinner theater, for those whose days were kept to a minimum or not used at all.);
5. developing an office assistance program where help can be provided to various college offices during peak periods;
6. distributing information about the college's new telephone system, including the direct dialing numbers of the staff;
7. developing a physical fitness program that includes swimming, exercise, and a golf league.

Some of the recommendations currently under development include:

1. the improvement of recorded messages on the telephone system—to be more helpful to the public and students who are trying to register for classes;
2. the creation of computer scheduling—to make it possible for secretaries to access appointments and vacations when setting up meetings.

The program at our college provides opportunities for the office staff to become involved in defining and participating in the improvement of their job situations. It encourages, and even demands, open communication between work groups and supervisors. It earns the employees new respect and recognition for their creative ideas. It has even helped them develop trust in the leadership of the college, because their suggestions are heard and implemented. As a result, the college is benefiting by the improvement of the quality of the work performed, and the individual is working in a job that has become more personally satisfying and provides opportunities for growth. In our quest for excellence, we still ask our staff—our most valuable resource.

Richard W. McDowell, *President*
Debbie Harju, *Chairperson, Coordinating Committee*

For further information, contact the authors at Schoolcraft College, 18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia, MI 48152-2696.

Making Sense of Babel

Striking epithets like "Dumbbell English" and "Bonehead English" indicate in a colorful, even euphonious way some of our students' preconceptions about our first-level developmental English course, English 101. They also prepare those of us who teach it to expect from some students an occasional measure of sullenness, if not actual resistance or hostility. However, they don't prepare us for all the student attitudes we discover in this course, which, perhaps to a greater extent than any other on our campus, attracts a large mix of linguistic heritages.

Non-native speakers, especially in an English class, often feel a kind of academic isolation, an isolation commonly manifested in their natural tendency to sit only with others of like background. This academic isolation is not surprising, nor are its causes elusive; however, effective methods of mitigating this isolation are elusive.

Because of several years of graduate work in linguistics, I have identified a way of making these non-native speakers feel more at home in my classes. These days I can conjure up bits and pieces, oddments and orts, from just about any language. Armed with these linguistic scraps, I set out to legitimize the native languages of those in my class who are tackling English as their second, third, ...nth language.

Because Spanish is always well represented in an English 101 class, I make use of many contrastive examples right away. For instance, when I deal with subject/verb agreement problems, I contrast the simple English choices of *speak* and *speaks* with the more challenging and interesting Spanish choices: *hablo, hablas, habla, hablamos, hablais, hablan*. The Spanish speakers in the class eagerly volunteer to provide the Spanish versions. They are both surprised and pleased to realize that in this case, at least, they have mastered a paradigm far more complex then the English example presents.

All this has a salutary effect on the native speakers. Most have the impression that Spanish is an easy language (compare the number of Spanish classes we offer to those in French, German, and Latin). I purposely choose data that will counter-exemplify this notion so that Spanish will become a more "worthy" language in their linguistically naive minds.

If many English speakers think of Spanish as an easy language, just as many think of Vietnamese as an impossibly difficult one. Interestingly, Vietnamese students are more eager than Hispanics to see their language written on the board to illustrate a point about English; they usually want to take the chalk from my hand to add the correct diacritics to my scrawl. I let them. Here is one example I use:

Toi gap nhan-ac
I see villain

Toi da gap nhan-ac
I saw villain

Toi se gap nhan-ac
I will see villain

The result for native English speakers is that Vietnamese is demystified a little bit and becomes a real language.

When my native English speakers complain about confusing plurals, I'll ask an Arabic speaker to show us how plural infixes work in her language: *kitab*, book; *kutub*, books. As she proudly goes on to give examples of the complex system of articles in Arabic, the English speakers sigh with relief and with new respect for Arabic.

My Japanese students will show us how the verb always comes last in their sentences, prompting more than one native English speaker to scratch his head and mutter, "But that doesn't make any sense." A few years ago I had a Native American student who knew a few words of Luiseño, enough to show the rest of us how a whole bunch of participles are piled up onto Luiseño verbs. And just this semester a young woman from Kenya showed us how the verb in Swahili must carry semantic class agreement markers for all the primary nouns in the sentence.

Exploring these other languages in an academic setting in the dominant culture validates them and their speakers, as well. They are pleased to be included in this intimate way, for language-sharing is indeed intimacy. The English speakers profit just as much, maybe more; they learn not only that English isn't that hard, but that it isn't even that special.

As for me, I suppose I did not have to study linguistics in order to do this stuff. It just worked out that way. I have more fun teaching now, and I do it better!

I, too, enjoy the intimacy.

Jack Quintero, *Instructor, English*

For further information, contact the author at Palomar College, 1140 West Mission Road, San Marcos, CA 92069-1487.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

February 9, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 4
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 5

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Sail Training at North Shore Community College

Sail Training is the utilization of the sea and sailboat to enhance the learning of specific content. Sail Training has been used for centuries to help build character and leadership skills. In Europe, especially Great Britain, Sail Training has been built into corporations as a national aspect of management training. Taking a content course out of a classroom and putting it on the water adds a dimension of personal integration and performance-based learning to the course content. Sail Training demands that students participate in their learning with both their minds and their bodies within the sea-bound environment.

In the United States, we have utilized sailing vessels for educational school experiences lasting from three weeks to one semester to one year. At North Shore Community College our major objective has been self-development through the use of sail and curricula content. Landmark School presently teaches literacy skills to its students. There is a semester-aboard program sponsored by a consortium of universities which allows students to take 15 credits. There is also a vessel operated out of Connecticut, *Vision Quest*, specifically for juvenile offenders; it has an 80% success record. Major universities have taught history, literature and music while on a sailing vessel.

The Europeans use sail vessel training differently than do Americans. In Europe, especially England, Sail Training is a part of management training programs. Most European business executives spend a week or more aboard a sailing vessel as trainee apprentices. The British have built a new vessel, *The Lord Nelson*, which is specifically equipped for handicapped participants.

"Although the shipboard setting is an uncommon 'classroom,' Sail Training holds to the common purpose of all education: to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Sail Training enhances general education, fosters marine education, and reinforces learning from the sea experience.

"In Sail Training, the ends and the means are inextricably bound together and require participation in:

—the interdependence of shipboard living,
—instruction and practical experience in sailing,
—on-the-water experience with the world of water."

The North Shore of Massachusetts is rich in marine heritage, and the College's Lynn Campus is ideally situated with access to the sea. In 1986, North Shore Community College was offered the unique opportunity to develop educational programming utilizing the sixty-foot ketch, *Pride of Lyn*, which is managed by a local non-profit foundation. The vessel has a full-time captain and crew, state-of-the-art navigational equipment, and complete audio and video recording systems. The boat's large, enclosable center cockpit, spacious decks, and comfortable main salon offer a variety of settings for small group meetings, as well as ample space for individuals to be by themselves. There are sleeping accommodations for six to eight passengers in three private cabins, in addition to separate quarters for the crew.

One of North Shore Community College's efforts to utilize this unique resource has been the presentation of four one-credit courses offered through the College's Division of Human Services in conjunction with the College Counseling Center. The courses have been conducted over weekends in September, 1987 and 1988, with crew, instructor, and four to six students sharing a live-aboard experience from Friday evening through Sunday. Each course has addressed one of several personal growth content areas: stress management, decision-making, and assertiveness training.

Enrollment in the courses has been open to the general student body although, interestingly, nearly all of the students participating have had very little or no prior boating or sailing experience.

The actual coursework has been conducted with varying degrees of structure, depending upon the instructor, the student group, and, of course, the weather. In general, most instruction periods have been held at anchor in the mornings and evenings, the afternoons being reserved for sailing. But, in fact, class is always "in session." This has been especially apparent on Saturday evenings at anchor off a local uninhabited island. After 24 hours aboard the boat, most of the students appreciate the chance to go ashore. On land the students initially react to the open space and to the sense of freedom it allows. The group stays together,

however, as it explores the island. Conversations tend to focus on the events of the past day. The walk on the island becomes a means of providing perspective for the experiences shared aboard the boat, and the sense of "group" is strengthened.

The group affiliation which develops in the courses has been a dramatic asset. In conjunction with the environmental challenges encountered by each student, instructors have been able to take a very active approach to students' learning. All aspects of the course experience can be maximized, both in the presentation of subject matter and in the facilitation of personal growth and increased self-awareness in each participant.

The courses were conceived and designed as total living/learning experiences. Decisions ranging from choosing cabin mates to scheduling formal class meetings were made by the group, with the crew as active participants in most aspects of on-board life, including some class sessions. As such, actual course content was expanded to address much more than the specific subject area. Each participant found himself or herself challenged by an unfamiliar, and sometimes uncomfortable, environment—where one's usual coping and problem-solving skills often did not apply—shared in very close proximity with a group of strangers, with limited privacy and no easy means of escape. This environment makes necessary the cooperation, understanding, and establishment of shared goals and values. It requires that a group of strangers quickly develop communication skills, trust in one another, and gain knowledge of members' individual strengths and limitations.

We have been fortunate to work with a captain and crew who believe in the value of such an educational experience. They have been eager to participate and are skillful in helping students adapt to the many differences in space, time, and motion inherent in daily living aboard a boat. They have been readily available to answer questions and introduce students to sailing.

Tom Gerecke, *Counselor*
Tom Wisbey, *Chair, Human Services*

For further information, contact the authors at North Shore Community College, 3 Essex Street, Beverly, MA 01915.

❖❖❖❖❖

Editor's Note to All *Innovation Abstracts* Readers:

Consider writing an *Innovation Abstracts*! Descriptions of programs and teaching/learning strategies are welcome at the NISOD office.

If you have an idea for an article and wish to discuss it prior to submission, just give me a call. But I encourage all potential authors to submit their practices in either a 3-4 page format (for a one-page *Innovation Abstracts*) or 7-8 page format (for a double-sided *Innovation Abstracts*).

Past issues of *Innovation Abstracts* are your best models. Diversity and practicality are our most important criteria for selecting and publishing articles as *Innovation Abstracts*.

Send articles to me at the address included at the bottom of this page. We are proud of our publication—written *by* practitioners *for* practitioners. Please seriously consider a submission *now*!

❖❖❖❖❖

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

February 16, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 5
© The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 6

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Teaching Learning Project—Fun for Student and Educator!

Integration of writing skills, critical thinking, conceptual learning, and concurrent theory and practice are of paramount concern across our campuses. As a college professor, I have witnessed a steady decline in the ability of my students to think critically, write expressively, and learn conceptually. This is a concern shared by our curriculum theorists, as well as by the researchers who suggest that writing is a critical component in all disciplines.

Of equal importance is keeping our sanity as professors and not inundating ourselves with mountains of paperwork. When we have classes of over 30 students each, multiple choice exams are especially attractive.

But we wanted to encourage more writing. Therefore, we developed a teaching/learning project that required more writing, but that limited writing assignments to one page each!

The teaching/learning project model presented here is for nursing students in a senior medical/surgical course, but it can be adapted to any discipline.

Criteria for Teaching/Learning Project

1. Content Accuracy (30%)
   It is imperative that the information the student is disseminating to clients or professionals be accurate. The content should be relevant to the subject matter of the course. For example, in the senior medical/surgical course, the student can pick self-breast exam, testicular exam, colostomy care, or a specific medication related to the course content for his/her writing assignment.
2. Content Clarity and Appropriateness for Client Reading Level (20%)
   The student must design the project for a specific audience. If the student is preparing a teaching/learning project for a client, terminology should be in lay terms. If the project is designed for others in the field, professional terminology is more appropriate.
3. Appearance (15%)
   Included in this category is neatness, spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. If students in any discipline want to be seen as professionals, they must be able to communicate with their clients and other professionals. Also included is the one-page limit. While initially this may seem like an easy task for students, they soon discover it is very difficult to effectively communicate in a one-page format.
4. Creativity (10%)
   I encourage students to be creative and "do their thing." Students have designed pamphlets and board games, and they have demonstrated tremendous artistic ability. Several of my students have sent their projects to professional journals for publication.
5. Evaluation of Teaching (15%)
   Students should understand that because they have been taught does not mean that they have learned! They must, therefore, know how to evaluate the effectiveness of their own teaching. On a separate sheet of paper they are to include:
   a) Teacher goal statement (i.e., to teach a client to do a self-breast examination)
   b) Resource materials used (i.e., AV material, printed handouts, models, pamphlets)
   c) Techniques utilized in teaching (i.e., demonstration/return demonstration, lecture, discussion, role-playing, question-answer period)
   d) Evaluation of teaching (i.e., client outcomes, specific and written in measurable terms)
6. Bibliography (10%)
   Students must learn to seek information from a variety of sources. They are to include, on a separate sheet of paper, a bibliography of no less than three sources which they have consulted (from the project textbooks or professional journals). Bibliographies should follow an approved reference style.

The teaching/learning project fosters creativity and puts fun into learning. It also allows instructors to be themselves, as well!

Claire Ligeikis, *Associate Professor, Nursing*

For further information, contact the author at Broome Community College, Box 1017, Binghamton, NY 13902.

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD)
Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin
EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

Essay Tests II

Because we wanted to enhance students' potential for success in writing across the curriculum, we designed an outline that described how to write essay tests (see *Innovation Abstracts*, Vol. IX, No. 25). Students struggling with the writing experience convinced us that they should be more involved in selecting content about which they were required to write.

While the students were able to define, describe, and give examples from text and lecture material, the overwhelming evidence was that students have difficulty integrating, synthesizing, or developing unique ideas about the concepts. As the result of in-depth interviews with students and developmental education faculty in English and speech, it was determined that students have difficulty expressing themselves without "ownership" of the material. STUDENTS WRITE AND SPEAK BETTER WHEN THEY WRITE AND SPEAK ABOUT SOMETHING THEY REALLY KNOW.

Thus, a variety of approaches to student test-taking has been initiated, with the express purpose of giving students more control over the material. The use and relative success of each method appear to be dependent upon several factors:

1. the relative writing ability as determined from a writing sample, collected at the beginning of the quarter;
2. the relative complexity of the concepts; and
3. the synergy of the class members' interaction.

All questions are distributed to the students at least a week before the test. Depending upon the content, the questions may be distributed at the beginning of the learning unit as "study guides." The methods of essay testing which appear to provide ownership include:

1. students selecting questions at test time from a pre-selected list,
2. students selecting questions before the testing date from a pre-selected list of questions,
3. individual students generating their own questions,
4. groups generating their own questions,
5. some combination of #3 and #4,
6. students weighing value of questions/answers (each student decides how much of his/her test grade he/she wants particular questions to affect).

With each of these methods, I have adopted a variety of "open note" testing procedures. Again, the approach depends upon writing ability, complexity of concepts, and synergy of the class. These include:

1. a 3x5 card for all questions,
2. a 3x5 card for each question,
3. a one-page note sheet for all (selected) questions.

The notes that students bring with them to the test further enhance their sense of control, and the simple process of reducing content to notes appears to help most students write better.

Different combinations are worth a try, and (perish the thought) students might even be asked to select the method(s) they feel helps them learn best.

Jerry Clavner, *Professor, Social Sciences*

For further information, contact the author at Cuyahoga Community College, 4250 Richmond Road, Warrensville Township, OH 44122-6195.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

February 23, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 6
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 7

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Why Not Team-Testing?

The current wave of management theory in business is built around the team concept. Not just any old teamwork concept, not just participative management, not just quality circles, but teamwork in the very broadest sense—much like the Japanese view of total team orientation.

Contrary to popular belief, the Japanese approach to teamwork is not a cultural or inherent one. It is not, as many people think, an original notion of the Japanese. It is an adaptation of an American idea—that's right, American. The man who gets the credit in Japan is Dr. W. Edwards Deming. It was he who, just after World War II, got the Japanese system started down the road to the standard they now enjoy.

The Deming process employs quality as the driving force behind everything in business/industry. The idea of quality permeates the team effort; the team effort includes all persons associated with the business—i.e., management, engineering, production, support staff, vendors, and customers.

One of the most obvious examples of the results of this type of teamwork in American industry today is the Motorola Company, a manufacturer of electronic products and components. Everyone who can be involved to any degree in the production of their products is involved. The result, according to Motorola, is that by 1992 they will have only 3.4 defects per 1,000,000 products or customer services—in other words, insignificant defects. They are serious about quality—quality in the Deming sense of the word.

What does this have to do with education? The purpose of testing has long been to measure results of student learning. Testing also serves as additional time-on-task and is, therefore, a learning tool. In this regard, it is not unlike other learning tools such as visual aids, class discussions, or outside reading assignments. The testing method discussed here helps to reduce test anxiety, stimulates cooperation and teamwork, and increases students' sense of responsibility.

At our college, in the business management program, we have started to integrate the teamwork concept. The process is creating dramatic results.

It all started about two years ago with an idea from our curriculum development specialist. In a coffee break conversation one day, the inspiration tumbled out of his mouth in the form of questions—e.g., "This Deming approach may have some implications for us. How could we install it? What could we do to get the students to work in more of a teamwork setting?" Then it hit us. Why not let the students work in teams while taking tests? Simple!

Whoa! Radical idea! What would other instructors say? What would the students say? How would we set it up? What sort of results would we expect? Is it worth trying? Too radical? Who knows?

What followed in the ensuing semesters is having a definite effect. It works! Not only that, it works in a way that the students take to like "ducks to water." It's a motivator. It's a go-getter. It's whatever you want to call an idea that increases understanding, improves retention, and raises test scores.

The process is simple—so simple that it's been overlooked these many years. It goes like this:

At the beginning of each semester, the students are encouraged to form study teams—not a new idea. About a week before a major examination, the student study-teams are given study questions to review—not a new idea. Then, on test day, the students are allowed to take the examination in teams—NEW IDEA (at least at our college)!

The most noticeable aspect of the process at this point is what happens when we (the instructors) walk into the classroom on test day. There is a dull roar coming down the hallway. We enter the room to find the chairs rearranged into small circles, study questions are being "cussed" and discussed, negotiations between members of teams are taking place, teams are negotiating with other teams, highlighted book citations and notes are rampant, and electric excitement fills the air. They can't wait to get at it—like hungry lions about to be fed. (We've considered just throwing the test into the room and then running away.)

On the serious side, having been a teacher for almost three decades, it is fascinating to see the students in this state of mind when they are about to "get it socked to 'em" with a major examination.

Then we hand out the test. Each student gets a copy,

but only one from each group will be turned in for grading. That one copy must have on it the names of all persons on the team. The same score will be given to all members. [It should be pointed out that students may choose to take the examination alone. This, in fact, has happened, but for differing reasons. In one case, the student felt as though he hadn't prepared well enough and did not want to let the other members of the team down. In another case, the team did not have time to get together prior to test time and did not feel that it would be fair to team-test. Morals? Scruples? You bet!]

The results? No cheating—not even an attempt. Why would you cheat when all you have to do is ask another member of the team what he or she thinks? Leadership comes forth. The democratic process sets in. Arbitration and decision-making run amuck. Consensus abounds. Problem solving is seen in its best light. The team members assume more responsibility for the material and are willing to "instruct" other members: in other words, teamwork.

We have not discovered any type of test item that cannot be used on a team test. Average time spent on testing increases—students spend more time and make fewer careless errors.

When tests are returned and results are known, students are not willing to accept at face value the incorrect answers. They have reasons (sometimes very good reasons) for answering questions in a certain manner. They want to explain their reasoning, and they want to understand why these reasons are incorrect. They take ownership of the material and become involved with it to the end. This allows re-teaching to take place when the students are the most receptive to it.

We have found that the process spills over to other coursework in our department and to other departments, as well. For example, this semester there is a group that meets every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning at 7:00 a.m. They have breakfast together and review for a variety of classes, depending upon the group's needs for the day. The courses for which they prepare together include subjects outside business management where team-testing is not used. They have discovered the benefit of teamwork.

But the best result is that student understanding and comprehension improve; on the average, the test results increase from 20 to 22 percent! The best side effects are that the students find out for themselves that teamwork pays off, that every member of the team must contribute to the effort, that the chances of beating the odds go up, that camaraderie has a definite place in the educational system, and that studying isn't so bad when you have someone to suffer with.

What's next? We don't know for sure, but we're toying with the idea of team-projects—i.e., research papers, case studies, etc. We're also looking at a team-oriented approach to redesigning the structure of entire classes, maybe even the Business Management program. Who knows? We may be onto something big here. But, all in all, we feel relatively sure that our business community will look at us from a different perspective once the word gets out.

Julia Briggs, *Instructor, Business Management Program*
Thomas O. Harris, *Instructor, Business Management Program*

For further information, contact the authors at Department of Business Technology, St. Philip's College, 2111 Nevada, San Antonio, TX 78203.

Celebrate!

NISOD invites you to its twelfth annual **International Conference on Teaching Excellence** and **Conference of Administrators**, to be held in Austin on **May 20-23, 1990.**
Major **keynote speakers** have been selected for the broad range of experiences that they will bring to our participants. They include:

- **K. Patricia Cross**, *Professor, University of California at Berkeley, California*
- **Ronald J. Horvath**, *President, Jefferson Community College, Kentucky*
- **Robert H. McCabe**, *President, Miami-Dade Community College, Florida*

Special events at the conference will include:
- **Mexican Buffet** and **Dancing to Texas Fever**/ *Monday, May 21*
- **San Antonio Trip**/ *Tuesday, May 22*

SEE YOU THERE!

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

March 2, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 7
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 8

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Motivating the Unmotivated

Over the years, I've watched them collapse, falling hard into the vinyl seats of the faculty lounge, heard them grunt the "Oh, hell" and "damn" that came from the experience of working with students who wouldn't learn. I've listened to the long sighs of frustration and then the discussion of the "fact" that students are largely "unmotivated," unwilling slugs taking up their time and best performance.

And though I, too, have fallen into this occasional "locker room talk" about students, I find myself now regretting my ignorance. Over the past few years, I have tried to take time to get to know my students—to talk honestly with them about who they are and what they want from me, the institutions where I have encountered them, and their education. They have taught me a great deal. I no longer believe that their motivation is the real issue regarding the ways many of them perform or fail to perform in my classrooms.

Students have made it clear to me that they embody many sources of frustration regarding the learning process before I ever encounter them, frustrations that are difficult to set aside for 50 or 60 minutes at a time. And they carry in many problematic attitudes about the nature of learning. They come from diverse backgrounds. Some arrive immediately after graduation from high school, but many others come to me after years of involvement in the work force.

In general, today's students are likely to be older than the stereotypical 18- or 19-year-old. They are likely to be apprehensive about traditional classrooms—paper and pencil work and "book learning"—and they are likely to perceive themselves as being outsiders when they consider the teacher's world—my world. They are often uncomfortable with formality. They are often lacking study skills. And they are often struggling to work jobs, raise families, deal with financial responsibilities and limited funds, all while trying to better themselves by going to college.

If all that isn't enough, coming to college challenges their social identity and shakes their confidence; many of them come from worlds different from mine and have been shaped by experiences far different from what they face in college. When I think about all that is going on with them socially, psychologically, and economically, it is no surprise that many students do not see my classes as the pivotal point of their existence.

Even knowing all the problems they carry with them, I always wanted to believe that my classes should be something they cherished and to which they would give themselves over. I wanted the best from students. If I could have had my way, they would have come to me as active learners, seeking assistance and insight at every opportunity. They would have thrived on academic challenge, and they would have challenged me to teach better than I have ever taught before. They would have questioned every aspect of their education and sought an understanding of the "how's" and "why's" of the factors that touch their curious minds.

Oh, what a wonderful experience that would be...but, let's face it, that's not what most students do. What a disappointment! How easy it is to blame them! And how easy it is to get frustrated...and how easy it is to fall into the belief that they are passive, uninvolved, apolitical airheads. How easy it is to assert that they shun responsibility, that they never question anything that relieves them of responsibility, and that they often drag other students down with them by using their social networks in the classroom to undermine the value of the lessons being presented to the potentially "good" students. How foolish I was to think I would not have to teach them how to learn!

The fact is—as I had to learn the hard way—classrooms don't have to be deadly, and students who seem unmotivated don't have to remain in the unmotivated stage for very long. Making a change required a great deal of soul-searching and rethinking on my part. And, most difficult to accept, it required that I accept some of the blame for what I—as a representative of the teaching profession—have been given in my students' responses to me.

I've learned that many of them don't know that they have the right to ask for anything other than what they are given. For the most part, they are the products of years of experience in schools where they were essentially told to sit down, shut up, listen, and learn—an experience that taught them that the teacher is the source of all knowledge and that learning is something

magically injected into them at some point without their awareness. They rejected that voodoo education then, and, I've learned, they will reject it again if I push it, even though they struggle with the internal desire to "make it this time" in college.

Contrary to the occasional lounge talk I've heard and been part of, students are in college spending their time and money because they want to learn and because they want a better life for themselves. Granted, they often don't know how to acquire what they want or how to make themselves learn what is presented to them. But, when asked for their opinions (often a new experience for many of them), they express that there are instructional areas that they have strong opinions about.

One of the most prominent comments from students regarding what they want from the college experience involves individualized instruction. They all want to have their individual needs met. They want to feel like they are more than part of a crowd, that their individual talents and abilities are respected and deemed worthy.

They want teachers who are real people, who recognize them as human beings—teachers who care about them—not just their test performance.

They want to be challenged, not decimated.

They want caretakers who check on them regularly, who support their individual learning, who inform them individually of their progress, and who assign a variety of tasks that give them the opportunity to learn in modes that fit their individual styles and that are designed to meet their level of learning.

They like teachers who talk at their level, who can joke and take a joke, and who let them talk and learn with other students.

They like clear, complete explanations and concrete examples, thorough (but brief) explanations of difficult concepts, and opportunities to have their questions answered.

When I think about what students want, I know that classes that deliver the same old message of "sit down, shut up, and listen so that you can memorize facts to dump onto a test sheet" probably are not going to motivate them. It seems clear that students are not necessarily unmotivated or unwilling learners; they are simply uninvolved in the depersonalization of the traditional classroom. They are willing to learn; they simply may not be able to endure the way they are taught. I now know that if I really want to see motivation in my students, I have to be motivated to rethink what it is I am doing to them.

Ronald W. Luce, *Instructor, Communications*

For further information, contact the author at Hocking Technical College, 3301 Hocking Parkway, Nelsonville, OH 45764-9704.

Celebrate!

The final program for NISOD's **International Conference on Teaching Excellence** and **Conference of Administrators** is complete.

Preliminary programs—titles for individual sessions and major addresses—will be mailed this week.

Plan to attend the celebration on **May 20-23** in Austin!

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

March 9, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 8
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 9

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Strategic Learning: The Role of Executive Control Processes

There has been a surge of interest in the acquisition and use of learning strategies in the past decade. In general, learning strategies are any thoughts or behaviors that facilitate studying and learning. Educational psychologists have learned a great deal about how to help students acquire these strategies but only now are instructional models being developed that help students to develop a systematic approach to studying and learning. A systematic approach to studying and learning gives students the ability to initiate, implement, and monitor their own learning in a strategic manner. Strategic learners are able to act as problem solvers who can custom-tailor their approach to fit with their own learning goals, the tasks' demands, the learning context, their relevant prior knowledge, and their level of expertise.

Executive Control

Executive control plays a key role in strategic learning. It involves **planning** how to approach a learning task or problem, **selecting** the strategies and methods that will be used, **implementing** the plan of action, **monitoring** its progress and success, and, if necessary, **modifying** the plan to more closely reach the goal.

The steps involved in executive control are not linear. Each step results from and feeds back into the other steps. Consider, for example, a student who monitors the success of using a method such as underlining key points as she reads to acquire information from a technical manual. After trying it for a while, she realizes that underlining is not the most effective method to use for information-dense text. This new awareness might lead her to reevaluate what she needs, or wants, to learn from reading the manual. She may realize that the purposes for reading a technical manual are not the same as for reading an introductory textbook. At this point, she could begin to explore other strategies that might help her.

Components of Executive Control

Planning. The planning component involves using study and learning goals as guides to determining the overall approach that will be used to achieve the learning objectives. The planning component also helps students to determine both the personal and the supporting resources that they may need. Effective planning requires that students think about a number of variables, such as: the nature of the learning task, the level of final performance they want to achieve, their interest in performing the task, their prior experience with similar tasks, the learning and study skills that could help with this type of task, etc.

Selecting. Whereas planning helps students identify the range of potential activities and resources that they could use to reach their learning objectives, selecting is the process by which students identify specific approaches and methods that will be used. Selection decisions are constrained by the learner's goals and the learning context. Selecting often involves making tradeoffs and compromises in an attempt to develop a realistic solution. How important is this assignment? How much time is available? How good am I at this subject? What is an acceptable performance level?

Implementing. Once students develop a plan that includes specific tactics for reaching the learning goals, they are ready to implement it. Critical variables for implementation include: the learner's knowledge of studying and learning techniques, the learner's experience with similar tasks, the learner's level of interest and motivation for reaching the learning goals, the learner's attitude toward the learning task, and the amount of effort that the learner is willing to expend to achieve each goal. Implementing is not simply a matter of knowing what to do; learners must also want to do it.

Monitoring. Monitoring involves checking the implementation on an ongoing, as well as a summative, basis to compare the outcomes of efforts to goals. Monitoring is the quality-control function in executive control. When students monitor their implementation on an ongoing basis, they can determine if the methods they are using appear to be helping them reach their goals for a specific learning task. By using benchmarks along the way, students can identify potential problems while still implementing their plans. Summative monitoring at the end of a learning activity helps students to determine if the appropriate overall level of

performance has been achieved.

Modifying. Sometimes it is appropriate for students to modify their approach to a learning task. Modification can occur on an ongoing basis or after a summative evaluation. Students usually become aware of the need to modify their approach when they experience some triggering event. For example, a student may have difficulty paraphrasing a section of text, or answering a review question for a test, or organizing the information in his lecture notes. Each of these events is a signal that he has a studying or learning problem. Whenever a problem is identified, modifying also involves analyzing the other components of executive control to identify the component, or components, that may need to be redefined.

Instructional Applications

Increasing Academic Awareness. One way to encourage the development of executive control is by increasing students' awareness of the factors that influence academic performance. For example, at the beginning of the semester instructors can explain their teaching philosophy, their instructional approach, and the nature of the tasks students will be expected to perform. Knowing about the instructor's expectations and understanding the nature of the academic tasks in a course helps students to create a useful study plan.

In addition, instructors can help students by asking them to be more explicit about their learning goals and increasing their awareness of how their personal characteristics as students impact their academic performance. Getting students to set specific goals for a course affects their motivation (they have something tangible for which to strive), persistence (they have an end point which marks completion), and effort (they have a measure of performance against which they can gauge their work).

Increasing Students' Understanding of Academic Tasks. Another way to foster the development of executive control is to explicitly explain the characteristics of specific academic tasks and what is required to achieve them. Increased awareness of task characteristics enables students to set more specific and measurable goals. The more information students have about the objectives of the course, as well as the criteria on which they will be evaluated, the more they will be able to regulate their learning successfully. In addition, knowledge about academic tasks is needed to help select appropriate study and learning strategies. For example, instructors can help students prepare effectively for an exam by providing information about the specific material that will be covered on the exam, the format of the exam, the type of questions that will be asked, and how much time students will have to complete it.

Increasing Students' Understanding of How They Learn and Think. Another approach to helping students develop executive control is to focus on the variety of strategies needed to be a successful learner. However, simple knowledge of which strategies are useful is not enough. Students need to know **how** to implement the strategies as well as **when** to implement them. Therefore, instructors need to: 1) help students develop a repertoire of learning and thinking strategies; 2) instruct students in how to implement these strategies in the context of the students' personal characteristics (strengths and weaknesses) as learners, as well as the demands of the task; 3) provide opportunities for students to practice and receive feedback about their use of this knowledge; and 4) provide opportunities for students to practice and receive feedback on when it is most appropriate to apply a particular strategy. Finally, students need to be encouraged to give rationales for **why** they selected a particular strategy, and weigh their choices against task requirements, their individual approaches, as well as their learning and performance goals in the course.

Enhancing Students' Executive Control

Effective executive control requires awareness of academic and personal characteristics, a knowledge of what is required to successfully complete a variety of academic tasks, and a repertoire of learning and thinking strategies that can be used to accomplish our academic goals. Individual faculty members can help their students become strategic life-long learners by enhancing their knowledge and skills in each of these areas through direct instruction and modelling. In addition, the development of a strategic approach to learning and thinking requires extensive opportunities for practice and feedback in a variety of academic and applied content areas. Helping students to become strategic learners is not the responsibility of one instructor...it is one of the goals of a post-secondary education, and it is a responsibility all of us must share.

Claire E. Weinstein, *Professor, Educational Psychology*
Debra K. Meyer, Gretchen Van Mater Stone, *Graduate Students, Educational Psychology*

For further information, contact Dr. Weinstein at The University of Texas at Austin, EDB 352, Austin, TX 78712.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

March 23, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 9
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XI, NUMBER 10

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

A Scrapbook of Relevance

Motivating Adult Basic Education (ABE) students to read on a regular basis and to develop skill in reading are constant challenges for instructors interested in the promotion of functional literacy. One key to positive motivation is the selection of instructional materials written at appropriate reading levels, with sufficient interest to hold student attention and special relevance to issues and challenges that students face daily.

Alberta Vocational Centre implemented a ten-week program in which relevance of subject matter for writing and reading would be given highest priority. It was designed to motivate students to read, to develop vocabulary and word attack skills, and to increase general knowledge.

The program followed the model of Individual Program Prescription (IPP), used successfully in special education and gifted programs. Students were assigned the task of selecting and developing a topic in which they would become expert. Each week the students gathered two or three pieces of information on their topic. They shared this information with the class, thereby increasing everyone's general knowledge. Ultimately, the goal was for each student *to produce a scrapbook* as a finished product.

Initially, the instructor helped students select a topic: (1) they were cautioned against choosing topics that were too broad or too narrow; (2) they were coached about information sources and information types; (3) they were provided with an orientation to the library; (4) they were encouraged to consider using specifically-named community resources—e.g., various government departments, newspaper morgues, police departments, and even travel agencies; and (5) they were encouraged to be creative and divergent in their thinking. Xeroxing an article from an encyclopedia, taking clippings from magazines and newspapers, paraphrasing longer technical tracts, and writing drafts of structured interviews were all considered fair game. The objective was to gather information that could be organized and illustrated in *scrapbook form*.

Students were encouraged to collect information during the first three weeks of the program. Once an adequate amount of material had been collected, students were instructed on appropriate organizing principles that they might use to structure their projects—e.g., chronological (historical), cause (effect), least to most, and general to specific. At this time students also were advised of the criteria that would be used to evaluate their projects—e.g., quantity of material, organization, and overall appearance.

Students researched a wide range of topics: AIDS, impaired drivers, Nepal, child abuse, the National Hockey League, motor vehicle accidents, tornadoes, parent-finding, clothes design, phenomena in space, history of Hong Kong, Rottweiler dogs, and native cultural ceremonies.

They used a broad range of research skills to complete their projects. One student discovered that the City of Edmonton had a Rottweiler on the dog squad. As a result of her inquiry and expression of interest, she was interviewed and photographed; these records of her work were significant additions to her scrapbook. Another student used the word processor to assemble the history of the National Hockey League, including team composition on a year-by-year basis. Still another student conducted structured interviews with adults who had been sexually abused as children. (Some of these adults had volunteered their stories after the school grapevine had indicated that she was working on the topic.) One student researched the topic of "impaired driving." Having lost members of her family in a motor vehicle accident caused by an impaired driver, she was initially intolerant of the drivers. However, her project exposed her to information about alcohol and Alcoholics Anonymous; she came to understand that the issue was complex, involving preventative treatment and education.

Students reported that they were sharing information (networking), meeting new people, and talking about new issues and topics over coffee.

Relevance is a critical issue in Adult Basic Education. It is prudent for us to listen and respond to the customers of our service—the students in our classrooms.

William Green, *Research Officer*

For further information, contact the author at Alberta Vocational Centre, Room 224, 10215 - 108 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1L6, CANADA.

Preparing for Biology Exams

Several of my former students have shared with me how they successfully prepared for their exams. I share these successful study methods, at the beginning of each semester, with my newest students.

❦

I hope that you have already established a successful method of study in your previous classes. I also hope you will quickly establish a new method of preparation if you have been dissatisfied with your performance in a science class or feel you will need a new method for this class. [Note: If you have a method to add to this list, please feel free to inform your instructor.]

1. Read over your class notes on a regular basis. Once a day, seven days a week, spend time reading all notes taken to date. [Variations: once a day, five days or three days a week]

2. Copy over your class notes on a regular basis. After each class or before the next class, copy your class notes. Make corrections on the notes and add any information previously omitted. Recopy again as needed.

3. Borrow the class notes from a classmate on a regular basis. Copy these notes and make comparisons with your own. Make a new set of notes that combines the two. Recopy again as needed.

4. Record the lecture and play back the tape as a means of review. Replay as needed. Make a complete transcript of the taped lecture by which to study.

5. Read the textbook chapter(s) that cover(s) the lecture(s) before the material is presented in the lecture. Or read the textbook chapter(s) that cover(s) the lecture topic(s) after the material is presented in the lecture. Or read both before and after the lecture.

6. Transfer your lecture notes to 3" x 5" cards. Each card represents a single topic or concept. Read over the cards on a regular basis—perhaps once a day.

7. Read the lecture notes aloud.

8. Explain the material to someone else.

9. Have someone read aloud the important words that must be defined and check your responses (definition and example).

10. Make physical models that represent the concepts—e.g., a model of an atom, compound, or cell. Make a drawing to represent the concepts.

11. Take the test objectives and check to make certain the review material covers the test objectives.

❦

While the methods varied, they all involved a regular time commitment outside of class and the realization that course material should be understood, not just memorized.

Lloyd L. Willis, *Associate Professor, Biology*

For further information, contact the author at Piedmont Virginia Community College, Route 6, Box 1-A, Charlottesville, VA 22901-8714.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

March 24, 1989, Vol. XI, No. 10
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1989
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 11

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Dumping the Plump

The 1989 "Dump Your Plump" contest, sponsored by Lake Michigan College, featured teachers and students exercising to low-impact aerobic videotapes, teachers doing daily 30-minute walks with their students, teams walking the school hallways, teams doing aqua exercises or aerobic dance, teachers bringing healthy food treats to the teachers' lounge, teams posting their exercise and weight loss progress, teams sending donuts or chocolates to other teams before their weekly weigh-ins, and team members sending their secret pals notes of support or bouquets of flowers.

"Dump Your Plump," developed by the physical education department in 1986, is both a weight loss program and a wellness contest. Participants have their blood chemistry analyzed, take a Health Risk Appraisal, have their body fat tested, have their diet analyzed by computer, attend a nutrition and cooking demonstration, attend a lecture on exercise, and participate in a walking clinic.

In the 1989 contest (January 13-March 23), participants included 455 teachers, administrators, secretaries, and bus drivers, on 54 teams from 17 school districts. Of the 455 participants, 453 completed, and 263 (58%) exercised at least 45 out of the 50 days. All participants weighed in on a weekly basis and attempted to incorporate exercise into their lifestyles.

Participants receive an 80-page manual that provides information on the contest rules, weight goal guidelines, nutrition information, and exercise guidelines. It helps participants chart their weight loss and aerobic activity, learn how to set realistic weight goals, eat nutritiously, and set up an exercise program.

A weekly newsletter is sent to each participant; seven to eight pages in length, it provides information on nutrition and exercise (information from newspapers and health letters) and displays the current team standings. Captains conduct their weigh-ins on Fridays and then prepare the newsletter for distribution.

This contest differs from most workplace weight loss contests: (1) because the contest is based upon promoting safe and gradual weight loss of one to two pounds per week, the individual can select a 0-20 pound goal (for 10 weeks) but cannot receive credit for losing more than the weight goal; (2) because exercise is an essential component of weight loss, each individual must exercise aerobically for 30 minutes, five times per week—a critical component of the weight loss plan.

In the 1989 contest, the nine members of the *Health Hounds* and the seven members of the *Fat Wienies* combined to lose 313.5 pounds, each achieving a perfect score of 6500 points (3,000 for exercise, 3,000 for weight loss, and 500 for submission of weekly weigh-ins); it was the second year they tied for the championship. They were closely followed by the *Central Slenderettes*, *Waist Management I* and *Waist Management II*, *Slender Gender B*, *Gutless Gages*, and the *Skinny Dippers*. The captain of the *Fat Wienies* attributed his team's success to the "team support and peer pressure" that developed during the contest. The team held frequent meetings and met on Fridays to remind each other to "be good over the weekend." The *Fat Wienies* are coaches or former coaches, and are, admittedly, goal-oriented.

In addition to the satisfaction of losing weight and getting in shape, the members of the two winning teams in the 1989 contest received a two-month membership at a local health club. Certificates of Accomplishment and t-shirts were also awarded to all who achieved their weight and exercise goals.

Asked what they liked best about the program, contestants made some of the following comments: "...(the program) brought together co-workers, helping one another with their goals." "This was the first time that our staff really pulled together and worked hard to encourage each other daily." "The support and encouragement that the team members provided for each other, along with the exercise, provided us time to get to know each other." "I liked the idea that 'we' as a school worked together." "A group contest provides the discipline and the desire to exercise and lose pounds."

As a result of the "Dump Your Plump" program, Lake Michigan College is earning a reputation for leadership in the promotion of wellness.

Don Alsbro, *Instructor, Health and Physical Education*

For further information, contact the author at Lake Michigan College, 2755 E. Napier, Benton Harbor, MI 49022.

How Are Things Going?

When do we learn about how things are going for our students during the academic year? Usually we learn when we see the results of exams, homework, papers, and quizzes. We have discussions in class, and we visit with students in the halls and in our offices—gathering additional information about how things are going. At the end of the year, we learn about how things *went* when we read the student evaluations of our courses.

While all this is very useful information, I decided that I wanted more student reactions and wanted them *on a regular basis*. I was encouraged to try a new method of gathering this information when I heard a teacher say that she never knew how many of her students felt about the course until the final student evaluations were submitted.

My first try at getting more information was very simple: *I asked*. After the students had completed one full week of classes, I asked each student to write two or three sentences on how things had gone during the first week of classes at Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) and to sign his/her name to the comments. This task was to be completed in a maximum of five minutes, papers folded and passed to the front of the room.

The directions given, I waited nervously for the first "Why are we doing this?" The question never came in any of my classes that day. The fact that I seemed interested in knowing about their first week was enough at this point.

Immediately after each class, I read the notes, which totaled about 100 by the end of the day and another 50 by the time all classes had met. I was very happy to read the reactions to PVCC teachers and the college. Students were very positive about their first week of experiences. They talked about how they felt about their classes and their teachers. They were eager to share their experiences in writing, and several added "Thank you for asking" to their comments.

I asked again a week later, "How did your second week go at PVCC?" Again they wrote positively, and many added an occasional question for me concerning the class. I answered the general questions at the beginning of the next class and answered some for individual students as I saw them outside of class. This procedure was repeated with, "How did your third week go at PVCC?" and then about every three or four weeks with the general question, "How are things going?" Sometime later I did get the "Why are you doing this?" question (response: "I am interested") and the "Do you read all those notes?" question (response: "I always read the notes").

What did I learn? Most students did have *questions* about the school, the lecture, the tests, and so on that they felt freer to ask in the privacy of a note. Most students had *opinions* about the school, the lecture, the tests, themselves, and so on that they felt freer to express in this way. Most students were willing to share both the good news and bad news of college life.

At the end of the term on the evaluation form, I asked the students to comment on this writing activity—the "How are things going?" notes that they wrote during the academic year. Again, they were willing to comment. Some comments were:

> "The notes were one of the nicest things about the course. They allowed me to express frustration and share accomplishments with an instructor who truly cares about his students."
>
> "The notes helped me because he (the instructor) was aware of where I was in my life."
>
> "I like the notes. They make me think about my emotional outlook and even let me vent some frustration."
>
> "The notes were a new experience. I guess he read them all. I like the idea very much."
>
> "The notes are nice; they show you care and are interested."

In summary, the "How Are Things Going?" notes, requested on a regular basis, have provided the additional information I was seeking concerning student reactions to their college experiences. I encourage you to give this method a try; then *write me* about "How Things Are Going."

Lloyd L. Willis, *Associate Professor, Biology*

For further information, contact the author at Piedmont Virginia Community College, Route 6, Box 1-A, Charlottesville, VA 22901-8714.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

April 6, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 11
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATOR ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 12

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

The ABCs of Student Goal Setting

Frequently, students have asked me to help them construct a career plan or even serve as a career mentor. I am aware that career planning requires students to set clear, measurable, achievable goals; and for many students, this would be a new experience. Hence, the time required to provide this help could pose a major logistical problem.

With the amount of material to cover in classes these days, periods do not allow much creative time for developing individual career plans. Class periods or advisement time, of an hour or less, limit the amount of time to complete a task as definitively creative and typically unique as designing a set of career goals for a student or even a class full of freshman business students—where career planning fits appropriately. (It works in other courses, too!)

Furthermore, the creative task of career planning can induce paralysis on the part of a student who fears failure or lacks self confidence. The less one knows about the future, the more one fears the goal setting activity; the deeper the fear, the stronger the reluctance to set goals. It's what I call *Quentin's Condition*. It can be overcome by allowing everybody in the class to get involved!

While the idea of getting everyone involved simultaneously appears unwieldy, I have found that applying the technique of ABC goal setting makes the activity possible, even with an overcrowded schedule. Though the process sounds euphemistically as simple as ABC, it requires some preparation on the part of the instructor prior to class in case the *Ciolfi Syndrome* develops—that's where everybody in the class contracts *Quentin's Condition*, and the instructor must initiate the ABC process by priming the pump with suggested career alternatives.

The Process

Usually a short discussion about jobs in today's explosive service sector will serve as a catalyst to drive the ABC process. First, you might list a few service industries and ask students to volunteer names/titles of "known" jobs. For instance, hospitality services, business and financial services, health services, social or governmental services, amusement and recreation services, communication, transportation, and public utilities are areas where job growth exists. Have students avoid the McJob services. Those jobs customarily pay low at entry-level, and you want students to think about a college education moving them beyond low-paying, entry-level jobs. The students should not have too much difficulty thinking of jobs, but come prepared with the U.S. Department of Labor *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, just in case.

Next, ask the students to provide you with (1) a short-range, two-year goal, and (2) a long-range, 10-year goal linked, preferably, but not necessarily, to developing a career. [The goal statements should be made anonymously; more students are likely to respond.]

If you have trouble getting students to think of career goals that appeal to them, try using *career anchors* or *self-concepts* that guide people's careers and that provide meaningful, personal standards for career success. Edgar Schein (1978) specifies five *career anchors*: technical competence, managerial skills requiring analysis and interpersonal relations, long-term job security, autonomy or independence on a job, and creative accomplishment and self-expression through entrepreneurial ownership. Using *self-concepts* gets students to think in terms of their lives: family and personal goals, business and job goals, or self-improvement goals. Using goals included in the course syllabus is effective, as well. Most students can link themselves to a career anchor, background experience, and/or a course goal.

Next, list all of the short-range goals on one side of the board and the long-range goals on the other. Have students recommend three or more measurable objectives for, or clearly identifiable paths to, each goal: e.g., get A's in chemistry and algebra, work in a drugstore, get a 3.5 overall GPA to get into pharmacy school. Another set of measurable objectives for the goal of, for example, Assistant Store Manager, might include work experience, two years of college, respectable references, interview skills, leadership training, and a good resumé. Each of these objectives could have objectives of their own. For example, the last objective might include: no job-hopping, documented self-employment, or contrac-

tual work for periods in the career that show no relevant employment.

Then have the students rank each objective, using the following criteria: "A"—absolutely vital to the attainment of the goal; "B"—better than nothing; or "C"—could do without the objective in order to achieve the goal. (The students usually have to start with the A's or C's prior to determining the B-level objectives.)

Have all the students help with the ranking process. In this way, the anonymous author of the goal receives the benefits of others' viewpoints about the career path.

A conscientiously created set of objectives offers the student the opportunity to see how information from the course may contribute to personal goal achievement. Career planning also reduces ambiguity—which offsets anxiety or *Quentin's Condition*, clarifies course expectations, and strengthens student commitment.

Even with limited instructional or advisement time, goal setting is a management process that can be accomplished in one class time. It works especially well for students at the beginning of the term when you discuss class policy and communicate course goals. It also fills the time on the first day with something that most students find interesting *and* personal. Effective goal setting in a class full of students lusting for the right direction in life can be accomplished as quickly as ABC.

Reference: Schein, W. (1978). *Career Dynamics*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Quentin P. Ciolfi, *Assistant Professor, Business Administration*

For further information, contact the author at Brevard Community College, U.S. 1 North, Titusville, FL 32796.

Celebrate!

Preliminary programs for NISOD's **International Conference on Teaching Excellence** and **Conference of Administrators** are available and can be obtained by writing or calling the NISOD office.

Plan to attend the celebration on **May 20-23** in Austin!

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

April 13, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 12
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 13

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

The Maryland Community College Project

"It was like having my brain washed with Windex," said a student whose instructor is a participant in the Towson State University/Maryland Community Colleges Project to integrate the recent Scholarship on Women. This colorful expression of the eye-opening effect of a balanced course epitomizes the experiences of many students at the five community colleges in the project sponsored by the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE).

There is a "ripple effect," too. Since students have started to challenge professors whose courses are not gender- and race-balanced, the "FIPSE faculty" know they are making an impression. Faculty efforts to balance courses have energized and empowered students by introducing them to the idea that the contributions of women and people of color count.

Balancing the college curriculum to ensure that all courses, not just special courses, include the experiences of women and men of all races and classes is the goal of the current "second phase" of Women's Studies and of this FIPSE project. The need for an organized and extended effort to balance the community college curriculum is particularly acute for several reasons.

To start, more than one-third of all undergraduates attend community colleges, and the majority of the student population is female and, frequently, minority. Even so, relatively few community colleges offer Women's Studies courses, and most of their traditional courses are not gender- and race-balanced.

If they are to make sweeping changes, all faculty need opportunities to catch up with the explosion in women's studies scholarship and time to study and absorb the complex pedagogical issues it poses. Faculty development projects aimed at addressing curriculum transformation have taken place at about 100 four-year colleges and universities around the nation. In contrast, at community colleges, where the typical teaching load is 15 hours, faculty have received little or no release time and few sabbaticals to begin the process of "integrating the curriculum."

After a three-year curriculum transformation grant project involving 70 faculty at their own university, Towson State University project directors received a second FIPSE grant to support a two-year curriculum transformation project at five Maryland community colleges—Anne Arundel, the Community College of Baltimore, Catonsville, Montgomery, and Prince George's. The Towson/Community College Project has three co-directors. The community colleges are contributing release time for the 45 participating faculty.

This is one of the few multi-college integration projects dedicated solely to community colleges. It is also the first multi-college curriculum integration collaboration between community colleges and a four-year college. As a model project, it exemplifies the advantages of bringing together a multiplicity of experiences and perspectives.

The enrollment patterns at these particular community colleges make curriculum integration essential. Nationwide, approximately 56 percent of all undergraduates are women; but 60 percent of the approximately 60,000 credit students at the five colleges participating in the FIPSE project are female, and 63 percent of degree recipients are women. Significant numbers of minorities, especially blacks, Asians, and Hispanics, are enrolled in most of the colleges; and at the predominantly black colleges, 72 percent of the students are women.

The purpose of the project is to help faculty find, evaluate, and then incorporate the recent scholarship on women and minorities into their courses. The structure was established to provide an effective learning context and a high degree of support for participants. Since Spring 1988, faculty have responded to consultants' discussions of gender and racial bias in the curriculum. Faculty have also been meeting regularly and frequently in discipline-based workshops (Literature and Composition; History and Philosophy; Fine Arts, Sociology and Psychology; Biology and Allied Health) to read and analyze feminist pedagogy and the scholarship on women and minorities; and to discuss strategies for updating their courses, revising their assignments, and testing out the changes in their classrooms. Since each workshop is composed of faculty from all five colleges, participants have opportunities to exchange ideas with a variety of colleagues.

While the immediate purpose is to transform particular courses, the ultimate goal is to transform the entire curriculum. FIPSE faculty are currently sharing their experiences and insights with colleagues on their own campuses, and some have been delivering papers on their work at regional and national academic conferences. A statewide meeting of community college faculty this spring will expose the project to a broader audience and distribute a monograph that will include summaries of the workshops, sample course outlines and assignments, and bibliographies.

The Integration Project directors, who read the journals that faculty keep about their experiences in the project, report that the participants have expressed excitement about re-learning the content of their fields, re-thinking their courses from a feminist perspective, and teaching newly transformed courses. Faculty also express their enthusiasm for working with peers from their own and other colleges.

Gail Forman, *Professor, English*

This article includes information from "Rethinking the BIG Question: A Multi-College Community College Integration Project," an unpublished article by Myrna Goldenberg and Shirley Parry.

For further information, contact Gail Forman or Myrna Goldenberg at the Department of English, Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee Street, Rockville, MD 20850.

Facilitator-Assisted Learning

When 90% of all college students consider the fear of speaking before an audience to be a serious handicap, why is it that Speech 101 (a non-required course) is one of the most popular courses at Mt. San Jacinto College? One of the reasons for our success may be the use of student facilitators. Another may be the overall design of the program.

In each section, four students from previous classes are selected by the instructor to facilitate a small group of 12 to 15 students. In addition to having completed Speech 101 in a previous semester, each facilitator will have completed four weekend workshops that enhance their skills in small group leadership.

All Speech 101 courses are taught in three-hour blocks, once a week (two day sections and one evening section). Each class is taught in a lecture hall with four adjacent small rooms. Each room is furnished with a lectern, a clock, and a VHS camcorder.

During a semester, a student completes 20 to 24 exercises, which some call "speeches." Ten to 12 of these activities are videotaped on the student's own videocassette. Students then self-evaluate, either at home or in the college library, according to guidelines provided in the textbook (written to implement this program).

A typical class session begins with a 10- to 15-minute lecture in the large group: reinforcing skills to be worked on that day, evaluation techniques, and feedback activities. The next two hours are spent in small groups, where students complete assignments, are provided feedback and evaluation by group members, and receive guidance from the facilitator. The last 45 minutes are held in a large group, where some of the students are given the opportunity to "show off" their talents. The instructor also explains and illustrates the next week's assignment(s).

The facilitator's role is enhanced and strengthened because he/she is a student who has successfully completed the course. In addition to serving as an interpreter of the instructor's guidelines, the facilitators encourage, guide, coach, assess progress, and keep records on each student in their group. Each week, the points that lead to grades are recorded. Students earn points for: attendance, evidence of preparation, presentations, and self-evaluation. The student, along with the facilitator, keeps a record of his/her own progress.

Each week the facilitator meets with the instructor for 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after class: building an agenda, problem solving, assessing student progress, and providing the instructor with names of students who may need special assistance. This time also provides the instructor with up-to-date feedback to learn what works and what needs adjustment.

Most students report an increase in self-confidence, and they can detail the skills they have gained and those they plan to use in the future. The best evaluation of this program's success in the consistently high retention rate—above 90%—and the number of referrals by students to their friends.

Del Barnett, *Instructor, Speech*

For further information, contact the author at Mt. San Jacinto College, 1499 N. State Street, San Jacinto, CA 92383.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

April 20, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 13
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 14

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

The Algebra Cup

A few semesters ago, confronted with the appalling numbers of student withdrawals from mathematics classes, I was challenged to provide a rationale by which the numbers could be justified. I lamely offered the national scope of the situation: People the country over seemed to experience math anxiety; entire books had been written about it. This was not a problem peculiar to our college! For some reason, this explanation did not seem to appease the challenger. He felt that surely those of us in mathematics could do something to correct this situation. I said I would take it under serious consideration, although I was wondering what I could possibly do without sacrificing the sacred syllabus and even come close to "getting the job done."

During pre-registration for the spring semester, students had filled my College Algebra class. Now, I could flatter myself and say that this occurred because the word had finally gotten out—the student body at last had heard of the high quality of my instruction. That would be coloring the picture! The truth is the word was out that I permitted the use of organized notes on notecards as an acceptable resource on all tests and quizzes, except on the course competency exam. Also, word had gotten out about the famous "Partnership Exam" allowed in my classes—two students could put their brains together, along with both sets of notes, to take the exams. Of course, the word had not gotten out that students could fail even with these wonderful resources. But the anxiety was removed.

I requested that my College Algebra class be reopened—I wanted as many students as would sign up. I wanted to demonstrate that I could teach a large class in mathematics and could retain the students. (I was not exactly sure how, but I was ready to try.) My course began with 55 students and ended with 51. I wish to share what happened in the interim.

First, I conferred with a calculus teaching colleague. We decided upon the five most important topics with which a student must be proficient in order to assure success in the study of calculus. When I first met with the class, I announced to the students that the class would not be taught in the traditional fashion—that we would be covering, in great detail, only those five topics. If anyone felt he was going to receive insufficient instruction, he was advised to drop the course immediately. However, if he chose to stay, he was to consider it his responsibility not to drop at all. One student chose to withdraw.

The class was divided into five groups—one for each of the five topics. Each group chose a team name, a leader, a truant officer, and a recordkeeper. The recordkeeper was to keep attendance; and when, in his judgment, some team member had too many absences, he/she was to notify the team truant officer—who was to contact the offender. The leader was to return papers to team members, to coordinate study meetings, and to organize her team's preparation of a study sheet.

I chose to record the students alphabetically by team. All papers had to be identified by student name and team name; stacks of team papers were the standard method for submitting assignments.

Team spirit developed right away: team members chose to sit in the same area of the room; the class "booed" the second person who came in with a drop-slip. (The third student to withdraw came by the office, rather than the classroom.) But the real spirit of the class developed in quite an unplanned way. During the race for the Americus Cup, I was grading quizzes. Returning the papers at the next class meeting, I wrote "The Algebra Cup" on the board, followed by each team's name and its score. The idea caught on—team spirit ran high the remainder of the course.

When I realized the class would end with about a 7% withdrawal, I asked the director for a real Algebra Cup. Today in the college trophy case is that cup, with the names of "The Factoring Fools," who finished first, inscribed!

Of those students who pursued calculus and with whom I was able to maintain contact, none made lower than an average grade from any institution. There is something to be said for cooperative effort in the pursuit of knowledge!

Barbara Walters, *Associate Professor, Mathematics*

For further information, contact the author at Ashland Community College, 1400 College Drive, Ashland, KY 41101.

Competition: A Recruitment Strategy

As many of our schools suffer from declining enrollments, we are forced to look at ways to encourage students to register in our programs. Some people may fool themselves into thinking that this is a task for the marketing department. But I believe marketing to be the domain of each faculty member, working in conjunction with the marketing department. After all, who better than faculty for telling students what their programs are about?

Our faculty agreed that we would accept marketing as one of our responsibilities. The problem was getting the high schools to invite us to tell their students about our college and what we had to offer. We needed a reason for them to want us there, and we created one—a typing contest! Because our main target audience was anyone who had typing/keyboarding skills, we were able to include all grade levels and speak to anyone who would listen to us about our contest and about our Office Administration program. (We realized that once we were in the school, students would have questions about other programs; someone from the college's marketing or admissions office joined our Office Administration group.)

One advantage of the contest was having the opportunity to work with the high school teachers directly: They work with the students on a daily basis; and the more they know about the Office Administration programs, the better.

We contacted a major supplier of college equipment, Olympia International, and asked that it sponsor the contest. Olympia agreed to support our effort and provided us with the first prize—an electronic portable typewriter. Second and third prizes—cash and/or gifts—were offered, as well.

Format

The format of the contest was simple. We had four categories for participants: grade 9, grade 10, grade 11-13, and general public. While our contest was aimed primarily at high school students, we acknowledged that, with so many adults returning to college, it was important to include the general public. (This is a very "safe" way for some hesitant adults to return to school. Once there, they can receive information on other available studies.)

Because high school students enjoy competitive sports and work hard on team spirit, our contest was well received. We awarded the winning school a beautiful trophy, which they kept for the next year. In addition, we awarded a Spirit Award to the school having the most participants.

Advertising

The amount of advertising will depend, of course, on the budget. Sault College decided to involve the media by having a separate contest for them. The only prize awarded was a trophy for the best speed, but it served our purpose and earned us some media coverage, also.

Evaluation

I shared this idea with a colleague from another college, and she conducted her first contest this year. Recently, she informed me that applications to their Office Administration program have increased by 29%. Our program, too, has experienced a significant increase.

Should you decide to hold your own contest, be prepared for a lot of involvement, hard work, and fun!

Rose Caicco, *Co-ordinator, Office Administration Programs*

For further information, contact the author at Sault College, P.O. Box 60, 443 Northern Avenue, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, CANADA P6A 5L3.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

April 27, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 14
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 15

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

A Teacher Evaluation Plan

Background

Thirty-three years ago in a comparative anatomy class at St. Lawrence University, Robert Crowell asked me to create an animal that would survive the rigors of change and evolve by learning to swim in the sea. I felt energized by his challenge. My mood in the classroom changed from apathy to the excitement and joy associated with active learning. The heavy feeling I had so often experienced as I walked to school lifted as I discovered that learning can be fun, something to celebrate rather than something to dread. I began a colorful journey back to the sea. I began creating a unique animal—me.

Doug Michell teaches classes in death and dying, the psychology of aging, and love and the human condition at California State University, Sacramento. He believes that he does not teach his students anything, that students teach themselves, and that students learn more under certain kinds of conditions. He provides a caring and supportive environment in which to learn, and his students are asked to be responsible for their own learning.

At the beginning of each semester, Doug asks each student to make his/her own learning plan. He offers suggestions and provides information—such as, reading lists, kinds of community projects, and group discussions; however, almost anything related to the course subject that has the potential of benefitting the student or society is acceptable. I learned more and probably did more work in Doug's classes than I did in classes where I had been given specific assignments, because I had the opportunity to choose projects in which I had a strong interest. At the end of the semester, Doug asks each student to evaluate what he/she has learned during the semester and to assign himself/herself a theoretical grade.

Dean Moore is head of the mathematics department at Lee Junior High School and teaches evening and summer session mathematics and statistics at Yuba College in Woodland, California. He is also involved in Ph.D. studies in mathematics at the University of California at Davis.

Dean noticed that one of the students in his summer session Algebra II class was motivated, did his homework assignments regularly, seemed knowledgeable of the subject as evidenced by his classroom participation, but did poorly on tests. When the student wanted to drop the class, Dean made him a proposal which would be beneficial to each of them; he wanted to use the student in an experiment as part of his dissertation. He started working with the student, giving him oral rather than written tests, at first. Gradually, the student, with extended time in which to complete the tests and a quiet place where he could verbalize the questions and the answers, became confident and proficient enough to do B work on the tests.

Jim Lawson teaches speech and English at Yuba College. In his beginning speech class, Jim addresses the issue of anxiety in public speaking. His premise is: The more we do it, the easier and better it gets. A student's grade depends on the number of times he/she attends class (one point) and the number of times he/she speaks (two points for speaking one to five minutes, and one extra point if the student has researched a topic). The maximum number of points per class session is four. Everyone who wants to speak gets a chance to do so each class period. Those who want to work simply sign in on the board when they arrive. Not only do Jim's students learn to speak, they learn to listen. People have a marvelous array of tales to tell and talents to share. Jim writes sensitive feedback on 3 x 5 index cards which he gives at the end of each class session to those who have presented that day. Most of us looked forward to those cards containing the "pats on the back" that we rarely give ourselves. Gradually, the students build confidence; and their speeches get more interesting, informative, humorous, and open.

Jim's approach in his advanced composition and critical thinking class shares some of the elements of Doug Michell's teaching philosophy. He creates a comfortable, caring environment, while asking us to work. We write! Like Doug, Jim suggests topics or areas of writing for assignments. There is room for individual choice within the boundaries of the suggested topics and for the expression of original opinions and styles of writing. Jim focuses on strategies of writing and the process of writing, as well as finished

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD)
Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin
EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

products. I feel creative and alive in this class.

What have Robert Crowell, Doug Michell, Dean Moore, and Jim Lawson learned from their teaching experiences? *Only they can say! And I think they should!*

An Evaluation Plan

A realistic criterion for evaluating teachers is that teachers have *learned something significant* from the act of teaching. Teachers need to evaluate themselves, and I suggest that each teacher be required to write an essay entitled: "What I Have Learned From Teaching (course name and number) During (semester and year)."

In writing this essay, the teacher must focus on himself/herself, he/she will discover that the quality and style of the essay will say much about him/her, and the specific teaching experiences will become the major foci of the evaluation.

By focusing on, observing, and writing about themselves, teachers may learn to attend to details which they may not ordinarily notice or think important, see more clearly what does and does not work, and be more sensitive to such things as the level of enthusiasm in the classroom. They may become aware of problem areas and think of ways of solving these problems.

The quality and style of a teacher's essay will be revealing. Does he care about teaching; does she care about students? The essay itself provides the evaluator with information about this teacher's commitment to teaching, enthusiasm for the job, organizational skills, and style of expression.

What teachers learn from teaching a course will be as varied as the classroom experiences. Writing the evaluation essay will give both new and experienced teachers feedback about where they are and provide insights into new directions for their teaching. I believe that a good teacher, beginning or experienced, needs to be interested in teaching as an *ongoing process of learning*.

By whom would the teacher essays be evaluated? I don't have a good answer, but I think that somehow teachers need to evaluate themselves and each other. I think that self-evaluation, honesty, and the sharing of these essays would be a valuable learning experience for teachers and would generate some exciting new approaches to teaching.

The ideas in my teacher evaluation plan originated from my disenchantment with traditional education. They grew out of the pain, fear, and anger I have felt at gobbling and regurgitating information. They grew out of the joy of experiencing real learning, of creating—the kind of learning I have experienced by working with Robert, Doug, Dean, and Jim.

Evelyn Audioun Wegienka, *Student, Yuba College*

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

May 4, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 15
© The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 16

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

A Story of Collaborative Publishing

When Jane Roberts Wood, instructor of English at Brookhaven College in the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD), asked her friend Frances Vick, Director of the Press at the University of North Texas (UNT), how to go about getting a book of short stories she had edited in print, a joint venture was born that has proved highly successful and fulfilling to all the participants, as well as the institutions they represent.

Like all good stories, this one begins with an idea. Jane Roberts Wood, a published novelist herself (*The Train to Estelline*), knew there are many talented writers in the DCCCD, and she saw the need for a vehicle to showcase their talents. She became committed to the idea that faculty and staff of the DCCCD would benefit from having their writing efforts recognized by their colleagues and the community in which they lived, and that students would benefit from knowing that their instructors were actively engaged in the creative process. Thus, the idea of publishing a juried book of short stories was born.

The faculty and staff of DCCCD were notified and given a four-month period in which to submit their stories. Sixty-three stories were submitted by the faculty, staff, and administrators from all seven campuses. Jane asked Sally Schrup, an instructor in art at Eastfield, and Donna Gormly, an instructor in English at Eastfield, to assist her in working on the project. Together they met with Carol Slipak, Vice President of the DCCCD Foundation, Inc., and asked for funds with which to publish the collection. They believed the project would cost approximately $7,000. Ms. Slipak offered them a challenge grant of $3,500 from the Chancellor's Fund of the DCCCD Foundation; so with some money in hand, the editors set about to brainstorm ways to raise the remaining $3,500. Feeling certain they would raise the rest of the money somehow, Jane was determined to pull the collection together.

First, judges were needed to select the stories to be published. Wanting to be as impartial as possible, the editors asked two writers who were not a part of the district to act as judges. Pete A. Y. Gunter, philosophy professor at the UNT and a published author, and Celia Morris of Washington, D.C., whose book had won the Texas Institute of Letters Carr P. Collins Award for Distinguished Nonfiction, were asked to read and select the stories. As Jane describes the process in the introduction to the book: "Over a period of weeks they read each story several times and, finally, compiled a list of 'best' stories. The lists, not surprisingly, were not identical. Then phone calls between the two began, followed by more reading. Letters passed back and forth, followed by still more reading until, finally, on a cold day in March, I came home from Brookhaven College and found these 14 stories in my mailbox."

With the stories now chosen for the publication, the task of editing the stories began. The three editors read and edited, when necessary, each of the 14 stories, meeting over a period of two months to collaborate on the editing. Jane met with each of the writers at least once, and sometimes on several occasions, to fine-tune the final product. When the editors and the writers were finally satisfied with the result of the editing and rewriting, Jane set out to discover how to get the book published with the $3,500 the foundation had provided.

Enter Fran Vick. As Fran tells it, "I try never to miss gatherings of writers and publishers. Those are *my* people—the ones who share the same interests and the ones whose causes I support in whatever way I can. And, selfishly, one never knows what project or idea or interesting people one may run across. At such a gathering, my good friend Jane Roberts Wood said she needed to come talk to me about how to go about getting a book published. I knew Jane meant *publish* in the sense of how to go about putting a book together.

I was somewhat daunted by the task of explaining about trade paperbacks, hardbacks, signatures, type fonts, ppi of paper stock, grade A, B, & C cloth, 2-3-4 color covers, C1S cover stock, perfect binding, headbands and end sheets, designing, cataloging-in-publication, ISBNs, Advance Book Information—all that and dozens more of the small details that go into putting a book together after the initial editing, footnoting, and indexing is done. And, the difficult task of distribution

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD)
Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin
EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

and marketing in today's competitive book world had not yet been broached.

I had just recently become part of the newly formed press at the University of North Texas. Without any books actually in production at the time, we were looking for some fresh manuscripts and fresh faces with which to make our mark on the university press publishing world. It occurred to me that co-publication between the DCCCD and UNT Press would solve some major problems on both of our parts, and it would also free me from having to teach Jane how to publish a book! Besides, I wanted her writing, not publishing."

A bonus for UNT and the DCCCD would be that the co-publishing venture would open another avenue where both institutions could be cooperative. UNT already values the DCCCD as an excellent source of students who wish to continue past the associate degree, and this cooperative publishing effort would be another point of contact for the two. It provided a focus for a number of faculty, staff, and administrators to work together on a project that both enjoyed, and provided a happy occasion for the two chancellors to meet and fete the accomplishments of the project.

"The real treat for us at the Press," according to Fran, "was to receive the stories and start reading them. We loved the stories, and we loved what Jane had to say in the Introduction about the stories: She had written of her delight at the variety of voices she heard in the collection. We used that in the promotional material about the book."

The design of the book was placed in the hands of Rick Sale, professor of English and editor of *Texas Books in Review* at UNT. UNT Press members and the DCCCD editors met several times to discuss the progress of the design of the book and the title. By now the thought was growing about the book being "out of Dallas," in the sense of the writers being employed by the county's community college system (although the stories are set all over the world), so the natural place to look for cover art was the area's artists. The paintings of Dallas artist Donald Vogel, founder of the Valley House Gallery in Dallas and one who has enjoyed a long and distinguished career as an artist and gallery owner in Dallas, were sought. Teel Sale, Rick's wife and an artist herself, helped choose the appropriate painting for the cover, "Shaded Walk." Mr. Vogel generously gave permission to use the painting for the cover and provided the color slide for the four-color separation.

The book was produced as a trade paperback, with the list price of $12.95, in the hopes that creative writing teachers and teachers of short stories would use the book as a text. The two institutions hope to realize enough profit from the sale of *Out of Dallas: 14 Stories* to finance other co-publishing ventures, such as poetry and essays.

To promote the book, the two chancellors, Dr. Alfred F. Hurley of the University of North Texas and Dr. Lawrence Tyree of the Dallas County Community College District, hosted an announcement party to introduce the book to the media and to interested patrons of both institutions. The party itself was co-hosted, with complete cooperation between the two groups on decisions ranging from invitations to decorations and food. The event was held in the City Club, on the 69th floor of the NCNB Plaza, appropriately overlooking the city of Dallas. The wine and cheese reception honoring the editors, writers, and the artist, included author signings and was a successful launching of the book.

Publishing *Out of Dallas* has been an enriching experience for those who worked together to get the book into the hands of students and members of both communities. As many as 30 to 40 people voluntarily contributed their talents and time to bring about the publication of the collection, and in the process each has come to know and value the other more fully. If, as Dr. Tyree says, it is true that a comprehensive community college worth its salt is in constant conversation with its various communities, both among colleagues within the institutions and among the neighborhoods and constituencies beyond, then DCCCD fulfilled these criteria in this joint publication. The opening of still another path between the two schools has been a happy and profitable creative venture. The cooperative effort on this first venture will encourage them to seek further publishing projects and, doubtless, will encourage further joint ventures between the two groups in other areas, as well.

Jane Roberts Wood, *Instructor, Brookhaven College*
Frances B. Vick, *Director, University of North Texas Press*

For further information, contact the University of North Texas Press, P.O. Box 13856, Denton, TX 76203-3856.

Out of Dallas: 14 Stories is available from University Distribution, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843-4354, 1-800-826-8911.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

August 24, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 16
© The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 17

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Hunting for Orientation Ideas

To liven up City College's orientation program for new faculty and staff, the college's orientation committee decided to add a playful activity—a scavenger hunt. Until last year, City College had no organized orientation program for new personnel. Most new hires had to fend for themselves. An energetic new administrative staff, combined with proactive faculty and staff, organized an orientation program modeled on the one designed at Riverside Community College and published in Innovation Abstracts (Volume XI, Number 1).

Each City College seminar contained several components which ranged from ice-breaking activities, such as one in which the participants talked about something nice that happened to them that week, to heavier-duty sessions dealing with individual risktaking and teaching techniques.

As a *lagniappe*, for the last session, the President's Orientation Committee for Professional Staff (POPS) decided to create a scavenger hunt which would serve as a preliminary warm-up activity to a party hosted by the president. It, therefore, came as a surprise when the participants ranked the scavenger hunt as one of the most important orientation activities. Several of the participants stated that they saw areas of the campus they had never known existed, and, more important, they experienced the genuine friendliness of the veteran staff.

To actuate the scavenger hunt, the POPS committee formed a sub-committee of three of its members—two staff supervisors and a faculty person. This sub-committee was charged with designing a scavenger hunt which would cover the entire campus site (approximately 34 acres) and all the key campus facilities. The hunt had to be both playful and educational. The time from start to finish had to be 75 minutes or less.

The committee divided its task into five parts:

1) Select the target locations and facilities.
2) Chart the route of the hunt and decide on the treasures that the hunters would have to scavenge at each location.
3) Contact a key person at each location both to suggest appropriate "treasures" and to appoint someone as a host for the duration of the hunt.
4) Generate the flyers, reminders, handouts, and clues.
5) Manage the actual hunt.

The first thing that the sub-committee did was to select the facilities which would comprise the targets of the scavenger hunt. Selection was based on the following criteria:

- Importance of site to hunters—security offices, duplication services, etc.
- Importance of site for campus geographical orientation—most northern and western points of campus, etc.
- Importance of site for students—student health service, counseling, computer centers, etc.—so that new faculty could send students to correct locations.

Once the sites were selected, the committee members mapped out a route and walked it to determine whether it would be feasible to complete in the allocated time. Also, while walking the route, members spoke to key personnel at each site, asking for suggestions regarding items that the hunters might be asked to scavenge.

The hunt committee decided that to maintain the playful nature of the scavenger hunt, the "treasures" should range from useful to silly. Therefore, along with things such as requisition forms, parking rule forms, and application forms, the hunters had to return with helium-filled balloons, information on the number of living plants in a room, the name of the store across from the theater, and "artificial dollars" with the college president's portrait instead of George Washington's. (We called these Jeanny Bucks after Jeanne Atherton, the college president.)

Once the route was determined and the treasures assigned, the committee wrote a memo to a key person in each area. The memo, which was sent out three weeks prior to the event, explained the reasons for the scavenger hunt, told the time and place of the hunt, and requested that a person be assigned to greet the hunters warmly and give them the "treasure" that was requested. A reminder memo was sent out three days before the actual event.

After sending out the first memos, the committee wrote the clues, designed flyers and phony dollars with the president's picture, and arranged to have helium and balloons at one of the treasure sites.

The committee decided, for the sake of efficiency, that each of the hunters be provided with a map which

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD)
Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin
EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

highlighted the 16 treasure sites. The committee felt that walking the route in 75 minutes would provide sufficient challenge for the hunters. To make the hunt amusing, the clues were made deliberately obtuse.

Two weeks before the scavenger hunt, the committee sent the hunters an invitation designating the time and place of the event.

When the time arrived, the scavengers were greeted in a festive manner and clustered randomly into groups of five. One member of each group was designated informally as a group leader and given a map and a list of scavenger hunt clues. The group was instructed to return in 70 minutes with as many treasures as they could scavenge.

Scavenger Hunt Clues

1. Bring back the brochure "7 Steps to Admissions for City College."
2. Bring back a copy of City's parking regulations.
3. Bring back the signature of the City College person you call when you're too sick to come to school.
4. Bring back a buck from the place you pick up your check.
5. Bring back the signature of the screening counselor.
6. Bring back the name of a store that faces the theater box office.
7. Bring back an Infotrac printout on pollution or toxic waste.
8. Bring back an athletic event schedule from the place where the women coaches make their plans to coach the women.
9. Bring back a form that allows you to reproduce.
10. Bring back the room numbers next to the room where the handicapped students are counseled.
11. Bring back a completed form for ordering an AV film, tape, or other aid.
12. Pick up a flyer in the room with all the Apples and Macintoshes.
13. Bring back any health service brochure.
14. Get an authorization to post the flyer you picked up, and bring it back.
15. Bring back a balloon from the place where we learn to care about children.
16. Bring back the number of living plants in Tutorial Services.

Evaluation

The hunters all returned within the time allotted for the search. Most returned laughing. Several people remarked that they never realized that the college had so many facilities. Others said that they really enjoyed working with the other members of their group. Just about everybody said that they wished that the scavenger hunt had come earlier in the orientation program. There were no negative comments.

As a result of these actions, the POPS committee decided to move the hunt from the last activity to the second. The first activity will be an introduction to the orientation sessions and to the philosophy and vision of the college. The committee is planning no major changes to the format or structure of the hunt itself.

The entire POPS committee was taken by surprise at the participants' reactions. When the idea for the scavenger hunt was first suggested, the POPS committee members felt that, at best, it would serve to lighten a fairly heavy-duty orientation program. One or two of the committee members even expressed concern that the hunt might seem too childish and cause resentment. None of the POPS committee thought that the reaction would be as enthusiastic as it was. One of the new teachers summed up the effect of the scavenger hunt very nicely when he remarked that it made the college "less concrete and more heart."

Sid Forman, *Learning Resource Specialist and Instructor, English*

For further information, contact the author at San Diego City College, 1313 12th Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

August 31, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 17
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 18

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Moving Students Toward The Role Of "Active Participant" In Their Educational Experience

How can we as teachers create an environment in which a student recognizes the necessity of becoming an active participant in his or her own education? Most of us who teach have arrived at the same frustrating conclusions. It is not possible to motivate someone. It is not possible to "inject" a student with a sense of responsibility. These are truths that we encounter daily.

We have been teaching our "student success" course for one year and have experimented with many methods to create a classroom environment in which the student will recognize the necessity of becoming an active participant in his or her own education. Students frequently attribute failure in a course to events outside their control. The emphasis in our Master Student classes is that grades measure an expenditure of time and energy. When we use this definition, issues such as goal setting and values (priorities), time management, and effective as well as efficient study skills are all addressed. Metacognitive issues such as how the student learns and how to motivate himself or herself are emphasized, as well. We pre- and post-test each student with the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) and feel it is an extremely useful diagnostic and prescriptive tool.

Ask a roomful of students to "assume the student position" and they immediately and intuitively sit back in their desks, cross one leg over the other, lift their chins, let their eyelids drop to half-closed, and lay one relaxed arm across their notes and textbook. This is a waiting posture—waiting for the teacher to do something that will give them the information they need, waiting for the teacher to do something that will "educate" them, waiting for the teacher to do the work.

Anything involving "work"—the expenditure of energy and effort—seems to be disassociated with college. Traditionally, "work" has involved digging ditches, washing dishes, scrubbing floors, and other types of physical labor requiring energy and effort. A college degree is supposed to provide a way out of this trap. When students have difficulty with a course, they usually explain this difficulty as events beyond their control; i.e., just not smart enough; genetically incapable of doing math (or whatever); the teacher can't teach; etc. OR, perhaps the worst (or the best) excuse—this is too hard, this is work.

These beliefs are expressed in pervasive and subtle ways—work is bad, work is hard; college is good, college is easy; college is a way to spend time without having to work; college is the alternative to work. Students frequently attend college because if they were not in school, their parents would insist that they "go to work."

Many of our students spend 40 or more hours each week at a job. Many of these same students blithely announce they will be taking 12 or 15 credit hours, as well as working, because of their beliefs that school is not work; school is something you can do in your spare time and still have time left over. As the drop date approaches and their grades are poor, they report that the teacher made it too hard; the teacher wanted too much work. As an advisor, I have been told more than once, "that teacher acted like I didn't have anything else to do."

Many students say they want a college education but are unwilling to change a lifestyle that requires substantial amounts of money and/or leisure time. They consistently find themselves trapped by conflicting demands—they "have to" leave town for two weeks because of their job but get angry when the teacher is unwilling to reschedule an exam or excuse the absences.

I have not ever met a student who consciously and deliberately started college with the intention of dropping out or flunking out. A small percentage of students are looking for a way to put off growing up and the responsibilities of being grown up. However, for most, poor and failing grades come as a surprise. For another large group, those grades are proof of an inadequacy that they had long suspected and feared.

It is important for instructors to communicate that making good grades is not a result of having good genes and a high IQ. Good grades are not the result of luck or easy teachers; and (the biggest surprise and

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD)
Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin
EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

greatest relief of all) that making good grades is something that anyone can learn how to do.

A college degree is a measure of motivation and endurance/persistence; and grades measure an expenditure of time and energy. This is the foundation for a belief system that will allow a student to acquire what most of them say they want—a college education. Going to college is not a way of putting off growing up or taking on responsibility. Going to college is not a way of getting out of work. On the contrary, going to college is taking on a full-time job.

Learning requires energy. Learning cannot be passive—it must be active. Most students intend to do well in college. They do not know, however, that they will have to do something in order to succeed.

As an introduction to the discussion about how much energy it takes to learn, I write on the board: "Everything has a price tag." "You can't get something for nothing." "There's no such thing as a free lunch." We spend classtime talking about how much energy it takes to learn new things. For many students, this is an entirely new concept.

Not only does learning something new require an expenditure of energy, but it requires a focus of that energy. Learning will use so much energy a student may not have a lot left over to "party." This surprises many. They didn't know that the energy was finite—or—they knew at some intuitive level because they saved what they had and used it for something besides studying/learning.

Quite simply, learning has a price tag. It is that focus and expenditure of concentrated energy. Learning can be hard work. Difficulties in college are more than a time-management problem. They are, instead, results of a belief system that says: "College shouldn't take much time or energy. It is only a matter of sitting in class and reading a few books." Again, how hard could it actually be? You're "sitting," not working.

The real message—the one to be emphasized over and over again—is that different amounts of time will be needed for practicing/learning/using or perfecting a skill for different people. Not everything comes easily to everyone. On the other hand, not everything is difficult for everyone. Some subjects (and unfortunately—it is that subject that I hate the most) are absolutely going to require more time to learn than others. And "time in" is the key—not IQ.

A Strategy

I have my students bring three tennis balls to the classroom each day. The course objectives include "some degree of skill in juggling." I start class with music and five to ten minutes of juggling practice.

Some students "forget" to bring their tennis balls to class; and some students do bring the tennis balls and practice during the time I provide in class but never practice at home. Some students stand and hold the tennis balls and talk to one another. They tell me they will juggle in front of everyone else after they have learned how to do so in the privacy of their own home. Some folks acquire the skill of juggling fairly quickly. However, the majority realize quickly that this skill is going to take some hours of practice and is definitely an expenditure of energy and effort (you have to bend over a lot and pick things up). It becomes apparent that learning something new requires time, energy, effort, and a willingness to appear unskilled, inadequate, silly, or foolish; and that learning is a lot more fun if you approach it in a joyful manner.

And, of course, there are always some students who just get better and better. Each class day, they are a little more skilled than they were the time before. When asked, they tell of how many hours they stood and practiced, and how they got into a competition with their kids, and how they thought they could never do it, and how delighted they are with themselves that they actually learned how. And I (of course) get a chance to talk about studying and how some subjects seem to take forever to learn; but—it really is like magic—if you put in the time and the effort and the energy, "all of a sudden," one day, you can do it. The amount of time spent in learning to juggle provides a concrete example of the kind of energy it takes to learn something new. Juggling also provides a welcome "right-brain" relief to the intensity of studying for hours at a time. It becomes a skill that is relaxing, enjoyed, and enjoyable.

We must work to create a classroom environment where students can experience a world in which learning is a joyful process. Hospitals are full of people who expended time, energy, and effort but who did not feel joyful while doing so or feel pleasure with the results.

Teaching our "study skills/student success" course has become an enjoyable experience for the instructors and has provided useful tools for our students, and a can of tennis balls has become a trademark on our campus.

Linda Hartmann, *Counseling Associate*

For further information, contact the author at Richland College, 12800 Abrams Road, Dallas, TX 75243-2199.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

September 7, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 18
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 19

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

"Push Hands" : The Quintessential Hands-on Learning Opportunity

This activity is good for warming up a group and for introduction or debriefing a session on conflict. The activity has two phases: cooperative and competitive. Some lazy, sedentary types may need prodding. Do not rush. This activity requires at least 45 minutes.

The Game: "Push Hands" is a game used as a training technique for practitioners of Tai Chi Chuan, a Chinese martial art. "Push Hands" players learn balance, anticipation, and coordination. They learn to relax while in physical contact with other people. They become more aware of posture, areas of bodily tension, and concentration. The best players yield to force, as the supple tree bends with the storm winds.

Begin: Two people face each other, step forward with their right feet, place the feet side by side about six inches apart, with their insteps facing each other. They stand in a relaxed manner, with straight backs and bent knees. From this point on, all players will attempt to avoid moving their feet. The feet stick to the ground, psychologically rooted and immobile. The players place the backs of their right wrists together and imagine themselves glued together; so when A moves, B must move with A, in any direction, at exactly the same speed.

Phase one: Initially, the two players simply shift their weight back and forth slowly. After becoming comfortable with this, it is time to begin trying to move the hands in a horizontal circle. Again shifting the weight back and forth slowly, the players should turn their hips and shoulders in unison. A relaxed, pleasant, and cooperative experience usually follows. The players should continue for five or ten minutes. Players may switch to the left hands and feet, as well. This is a good time for several partner changes. Players will learn how other people move, whether they can both relax, and how to maintain balance when pushed. They will learn about yielding and attacking.

Phase two: Now, some competition enters the game. Without using the unglued hand, players can attempt to cause their opponent to move a foot, while trying to keep their own feet fixed to the ground. This can become quite strenuous and competitive. The most relaxed people—the ones who yield to force, neutralizing the force by turning to the side and sinking into the ground, and do not resist—will be most successful. Various strategies will emerge.

It is certainly worth repeating that the secret to success at this game is the ability to relax and sink the weight into the ground, while neutralizing the force of the attacker by turning to the side exactly as the attacker applies force. Remain glued at the wrist, and you win.

Discussion: Take a break and discuss what is going on. Who is winning and who is losing? How do the players feel? What have they learned about conflict? Which strategies and styles were the most and least successful? How do conflict and cooperation differ?

Conflict management styles: Now ask players for their observations on some conflict management styles: (1) Wimping Out, (2) Fighting Back, and (3) Neutralizing Force. Give examples from social situations. Discuss conflicts which have escalated into wars. Discuss the stratification and cultural implications of different styles of managing conflict.

If you are familiar with Taoist philosophy, discuss the difference between Yin (yielding, soft) and Yang (attacking, hard). Discuss the Taoist philosopher Lao Tse's concepts from the classic Tao Teh Ching, such as soft overcoming hard, and virtues of patience and humility.

Switch partners: Again, with new partners (switch partners often so the players will get to experience considerable diversity) start from the beginning. This time reinforce the idea that relaxation and softness win. Prompt players to try to entice the forceful attackers into losing their balance, then gently guide them off their clumsy feet. A skilled player can frustrate a forceful attacker almost every time. Many women will excel at this.

After everyone is exhausted, have players discuss or write about conflicts they have experienced or they

know about. Have them express how these conflicts would have turned out using each of the three strategies. Discuss the Oriental versus Western Philosophies. Explore the differences between conflict management and conflict resolution.

Follow up: Play the game again later in the semester. See if anyone learned anything new about conflict.

Jack Matthews, *Director, Student Support Services Program*

For further information, contact the author at Jefferson Community College, 109 E. Broadway, Louisville, KY 40202.

"Since Dark Is What Brings Out Your Light..."

The amazing thing about our changing technology is not the technology itself, but the impact it makes on our lives and the irreversible things that it does to our culture. Automated teller machines have not only made banking easier, but they have changed the way that we do banking. Home computers have not only changed the way we do our income taxes and improved the legibility of our written correspondence, but they have changed the after-school habits of adolescents and tied up our telephone lines with their endless hunger for modem communication. The gasoline engine made it possible for Henry Ford to make millions; it also allowed the kind of mobility that enabled American mothers to enter the workforce in large numbers. And, the impact is not always what we think it will be. Who would have guessed that the introduction of microwave technology would lead to the break-up of AT&T? This is all by way of saying that I should not have been surprised when my attempt at applying some new technology to my teaching methodology had some unexpected results.

My academic department decided to reintroduce a course not recently offered, "Introduction to Business." This was a course aimed at non-business majors and primarily taken by developmental students who were not ready to choose a major or not yet academically prepared for their chosen field. Being the least senior faculty member in my department, I was assigned the course and set out to make it as interesting for myself and my students as possible.

Knowing in advance that the majority of my students would also be taking developmental English and reading courses, one of my first objectives was to supplement reading material with clear, concise representations of the important concepts. Standard audiovisual techniques did not seem to be adequate; however, I was lucky enough to be involved with the IBM CIM program and had access to a laboratory with an overhead projection system connected to the CIM AS/400, a PS2, and an inexpensive VCR. I chose a text which came with a library of video case studies (which could be shown on the large screen through the overhead system) and decided to do my lectures through the PS2, preparing "slides" with the help of Harvard Graphics, a large library of clip art, all projected in color through the overhead projection system. It worked well; the frequent changes from discussion to computer-illustrated lecture to large screen video case studies kept everyone's attention. In all of this, there was one surprise!

I encourage discussion and keep track of participation levels. Therefore, I am aware when students are involved. I began to notice that every time I turned out the lights to use the projection system, faceless voices came to me out of the blackness of the rows and columns. These voices floated up asking questions, stating opinions, contributing miscellaneous facts or examples relating to the subject at hand. The lack of light seemed to bring with it a lack of self-consciousness and a kind of openness. I do not know if there is a way to simulate this without the darkness, but I am getting more thought and communication from developmental students on a regular basis than I thought possible.

What is the lesson here? We academics tend to minimize the effect that a classroom has on those who do not find it easy, those who have not been in a classroom for many years, or those for whom it was never a good experience. I am reminded of Robert Frost's ponderings on the subject of illumination coming out of the dark (hence, my title). My own experiences in the dark have taught me to at least think about the way my students feel in class and encouraged me to try ways other than turning out the lights to free my students from fear of ridicule or failure.

Cheryl G. Baraldi, *Associate Professor, Business Administration.*

For further information, contact the author at Springfield Technical Community College, Armory Square, Springfield, MA 01105.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

September 14, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 19
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 20

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Creating Enthusiasm In The Classroom

At a convention I attended several years ago, a speaker tried to convey to an audience of mathematics teachers that they must be actors in their classrooms. I fell prey to that piece of advice and have not regretted it in my many years of teaching; when I tried it, I saw immediate positive results. Hence, students see many sides of me, especially when I jovially concoct all types of mathematics examples pertinent to the topic under discussion. So we talk about shopping for bargains (sale discounts), lottery tickets, salary increases, traveling by car to New York, traveling by plane with and against the wind when going on vacation, traveling by boat with and against the current on the river, and investing money to become financially independent.

This technique is deliberate. (1) Many students find mathematics boring; and if students can relate mathematics taught in the classroom with real life experiences, then there exists a great possibility that the subject matter might become more meaningful and lasting. (2) After teaching for several years, the teacher needs to create excitement in the classroom for himself/herself to combat the feelings of burn-out.

My reason, however, for writing this article is to share a new experience with readers.

Some of us teach the same courses semester after semester; and having done so for several years, we can attend classes and give lectures, with little or no preparation. Teaching should be challenging both to the students and to ourselves; when it becomes more challenging to us, the lectures become more stimulating and interesting to the students. As a result, often we need to try new methods, various teaching/learning techniques.

I decided to teach a course which I had not taught for several years; this meant that I would be forced out of the complacency which comes with teaching the same courses all the time. But what I discovered was that the students were not getting the same "high" as I anticipated. They participated, but not satisfactorily. So I decided to try something new—new to my style of teaching. At the end of a class session, I announced what would be covered during the next class period. I divided this section of the text among the students and asked each one to read the entire section and prepare a presentation to be made to the class.

At the next class session, after answering questions about the day's activities, I sat with the students while they gave presentations. Each presentation was critiqued by me and/or the other students in a very positive manner, paying attention to omissions of important items. I filled in those areas for which there were no students to report (two students were absent).

Some students tended to read directly from the text, while others were more thorough in their preparation and delivery. At the end of the students' presentations, I gave a quick overall summary and some advice as to how they could better prepare their assignments. Homework assignments were then made based on topics discussed in class.

At the next class session everyone was present, and I repeated the technique, assigning each student an area of study to report on in class. The students came much better prepared; they used the chalkboard, illustrated problems, drew graphs, and made excellent presentations. [Whereas I might have given a C to a first attempt, the second attempt would have received an A minus.] The students appeared confident in their presentations and were very convincing in their arguments. Some of them literally took on the "air" of a professor at the board.

The presentations were valuable and enjoyable teaching successes. I began to award a maximum of ten points for the presentations, and there was a marked increase in enthusiasm among the students. They got to know each other better, and the "stronger" helped the "weaker" whenever they had to work on problems in class.

Following are some students' opinions of this methodology:

> Class presentations are good educational tools. You are forced to learn and understand the material you must present.

I believe that as a student it is sometimes easier to translate and transfer information to other students. Therefore, I gained from having fellow students present different topics in mathematics to me.

When you are assigned to do problems on your own and explain them to the class, it tests you to see whether you understand or if you are capable of doing the problems. You feel more obligated and will try to do your best. Also you can benefit from it; because as you explain it, students and teacher can point out to you aspects of the problem you might not be able to see or understand. I think you develop a feeling of self-confidence.

M. Inez Everest, *Professor, Mathematics*

For further information, contact the author at South Central Community College, 60 Sargent Drive, New Haven, CT 06511.

Peer Tutors

A common dilemma facing both two- and four-year institutions is publicizing the existence of tutoring services on campus while increasing the legitimacy of peer tutors for the general student population. As Tutor Coordinator and Student Support Services Counselor, I have recently explored some innovative methods to meet both needs for campus tutoring services. One of the most effective methods is the utilization of peer tutors as facilitators for study skills seminars under the sponsorship of Student Support Services.

Initially, tutors helped with organizing materials and publicizing the seminars through the use of posters and memos to students and faculty. They would also help with the organization of group activities for the seminars and evaluation process itself.

This past fall semester, several of the tutors expressed an interest in presenting at the seminars, in addition to their other responsibilities. One of the tutors had already demonstrated presentation expertise by sharing information about the Tutoring Lab with prospective students on visitation days.

I applauded the tutors' initiative: presentations would be opportunities to present themselves as authorities and role models to the general student population, and would be opportunities to better organize the increasing numbers of students attending study skills seminars.

I met with three of the tutors a week before the seminar to compile a "script" for the presentations. We wanted to be consistent not only with the study skills information presented, but with procedures for structuring group activities. Peer tutors were invited to provide input, so that planning the seminars could be a democratic process.

Final copies of all materials were provided for each tutor. Each was to be responsible for a small group (four to eight people), depending on the total number of students attending the seminar. [In the past, when large numbers of students—25 to 45—attended, it was difficult (if not impossible) to carry out group activities. With tutors dividing the large group into smaller groups of four to eight people, then going into separate classrooms, group activities were much better organized and executed.]

The result of this plan was that more students became familiar with the work of the tutors, and the tutors were viewed both as role models and as group facilitators. In addition, seminar activities became the small group experiences that we had sought to provide initially.

Both the peer tutors and the Tutoring Center have earned a well-deserved legitimacy in the eyes of the general student population.

Mark E. Lockwood, *Tutor Coordinator, Student Support Services*

For further information, contact the author at Spartanburg Methodist College, 1200 Textile Road, Spartanburg, SC 29301-0009.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

September 21, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 20
© The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 21

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Explanation Games: If He'd Seen the Sawdust...

An explanation game is a game in which participants have to discover an explanation for a scenario or series of events, supplied at the outset by the game leader. Participants ask questions which the leader may answer "yes," "no," or "irrelevant." Participants have, then, to formulate general hypotheses about the form of the hidden explanation and to reject or modify them in response to answers from the leader, until the correct hypothesis is reached. There is no guarantee (far from it!) that the correct hypothesis will be the most reasonable: the correct answer is simply the explanation which the game leader had in mind.

An example of an explanation game begins with the clue: "If he'd seen the sawdust, he wouldn't have died." The answer, it turns out, is as follows: "he" was the shortest man in the world, in the habit of checking this status by measuring himself with a wooden stick of the same length as his height. His rival, the second shortest, had engineered a heart attack by shortening the stick, thus leading the deceased to believe that he had grown, and that his livelihood was in jeopardy. (He makes his living from his lack of height, e.g., in a circus.)

I use these games in teaching philosophical critical thinking at my community college. (The original idea from using them in this context came to me from Dr. Lawrence Resnick at Simon Fraser University.) They are suitable, however, for incorporation into a wide range of disciplines where the attempt is to encourage critical thinking among students. Here I'll try to motivate a belief in their usefulness in teaching both philosophy of science and science subjects in general.

First of all, they constitute active, student-centered, and collaborative learning. Students are actively engaged in thinking in the classroom and must draw on previously-gained knowledge and understanding of the world, working collaboratively, to maximize the efficiency of the solution process. As a result, the games are fun; and the affective responses of curiosity, puzzlement, success, and realization set the tone for other learning activities later in class.

Second, the games promote the development of a number of important reasoning abilities, valuable in academic as well as ordinary life. The kinds of reasoning abilities these games require, and therefore develop, include: memory/recall; precision in choice of expression; attention to consistency and implication; awareness of assumptions behind questions (avoidance of the fallacy of "dubious assumption" or "loaded question"); attention to the generality and specificity of questions with respect to their efficiency in approaching a correct hypothesis; and use of metaquestions (e.g., "Would it help me if I asked...?").

The games can be played with or without instructive comment on questioning strategies; this is very useful once the basic idea has been assimilated by the students. Also valuable is trying to reconstruct the reasoning processes at the end of the game. The assumption, supported by metacognition research, is that self-conscious understanding of the logical processes involved in the games enables students to develop the corresponding reasoning abilities.

Third, the process of the game models the hypothetico-deductive picture of science described by, among others, Karl Popper. At some point in the term I make this explicit, in the hope that familiarity with the games will add to the understanding of scientific method which I wish to convey.

The hypothetico-deductive model of science can be explained through the use of the games by developing the following analogy: in science, hypotheses are tested by developing the logical consequences of one hypothesis which are not also those of another, and finding out by experiment whether these logical consequences are true; if so, the hypothesis receives more support, though there is seldom a final "answer" to this "problem" until one brings in extra-scientific considerations. In the games, players test their hypothetical explanations by thinking of a logical consequence of a hypothesis they have in mind and asking if it's true. The instructor, who plays the role of "Nature," gives more definite answers than she, but the confirmation of a hypothesis is still a gradual process involving the rejection of alternative explanations.

This analogy raises the possibility of modelling scientific reasoning in a parallel sort of game, in which

both scenario and explanation are part of the course content. For example, students could "work out" a theory by designing experiments and asking the instructor what the results would be. Other possible applications might be to standardize analysis of salts (by flame-testing and other reactions), biological classification by anatomical features, and the naming of organic compounds.

In this kind of game, direct attempts to guess the answer would have to be refused, perhaps by distinguishing between "experimental," "hypothetical," and "metahypothetical" questions. Experimental questions ask about the result of a certain experiment, manipulation, or observation. Hypothetical questions are attempts to guess the answer. Metahypothetical questions are about not entirely relevant features of the correct hypothesis (e.g., "Does it begin with the letter A?").

In the initial stages of the game, only experimental questions would be allowed; hypothetical questions would be considered only when a wealth of "experimentation" has already been carried out. Metahypothetical questions might be disallowed entirely, except in one circumstance: If one is impressed by the significance of analogy in scientific discovery, one might accept such metahypothetical questions as, "Is this case similar to the one we had in electricity last week?"

I have not used games of this form myself, since I do not teach in the requisite scientific context, but I have heard of games like this being developed as enhancements of one called Rulemaker. Rulemaker is a mathematical game in which participants try to formulate a rule which explains some sequence of numbers, shapes, playing cards, or whatever. I have not heard of its being employed in the cumulative question-and-answer mode, but I see no reason why it shouldn't.

I have a list of 13 explanation games of the general type which I'd be willing to share with anyone. I would appreciate hearing from anyone using the scientific versions or games like them.

John A. Black, *Instructor, Arts & Humanities Department*

For further information, contact the author at Douglas College, P.O. Box 2503, New Westminster, British Columbia V3L 5B2, CANADA.

The International Minute

At Calhoun Community College, we have a list of goals to be accomplished by the year 2000. One of these goals is to include an international element in every course. In response, I implemented an activity called "The International Minute" in my Developmental Reading class. Three international students, one from India and two from Puerto Rico, were to teach my other students about their countries.

I told the three international students that we were delighted to have them in our class, that we would like to learn from them, and that each day I would ask one of them to give us a one-minute lesson on his/her country.

At first the students appeared nervous and came to class with books, pictures, and objects to "show and tell." I had to remind them to teach us just one fact or idea per day and to limit the presentation to one minute. At the beginning I had to help them with their English, get them to write foreign words on the board, or ask them to speak louder. They began by teaching us their names and how to pronounce them. They moved on to locating their countries on the map; telling us the names of the capitals and important leaders; describing holidays, foods, and creatures unique to their countries; and describing beautiful vacation spots we might enjoy visiting. They also explained their educational systems. Toward the end of the quarter they told us what they liked most about the U.S. and what they thought Americans could learn from the people of their country.

The American students enjoyed this activity, asking questions, and commenting frequently. One commented, "If we did this in all of our classes, just think how much we could learn about the rest of the world in just one quarter." This activity also benefited the international students by enabling them to make friends and feel comfortable early on and by giving them practice speaking English in a group situation.

I benefited from the activity, as well. Too often I forget that my students have much to teach me. My rapport with *all* students improved because they saw me as someone who loves to learn.

Vicki Earnest, *Instructor, English*

For further information, contact the author at Calhoun Community College, P.O. Box 2216, Decatur, AL 35609-2216.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

September 28, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 21
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 22

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Using Test Feedback to Facilitate the Learning Process

Test feedback has been widely recognized as an essential part of the teaching and learning process. By giving useful feedback at the appropriate time and place, instructors have the potential to provide students with valuable information, as well as strategies they can use to improve their academic performance on future tests or other assessment measures.

Levels of Feedback

In both the research and applied literatures, feedback is described in many different ways, using many different labels. The following hierarchy is designed to synthesize these different labels into an organizational scheme which highlights their commonalities.

Level 1: Simple Knowledge of Results

At Level 1, the instructor provides the students with simple knowledge of results (e.g., "yes, that is a correct answer" or "no, that is an incorrect answer"). On an essay question this would be equivalent to simply writing, "-0 points," or "-5 points," or "C+," with no other comments. Feedback at this level merely tells the students that they were correct, incorrect, or how far away from being correct they were with their answer. It is a simple statement of where students are with reference to some standard. Although simple knowledge of results is useful for some evaluation functions, it is not as informative as the other levels of feedback.

Level 2: Knowledge of Results + Identification of the Error (discussion of where and/or how the students went wrong)

At Level 2, the instructor provides the students with knowledge of results and diagnostic information about their errors. For example, when discussing an essay question with a student, the instructor could say something like this: "It looks like you spent a lot of time discussing the first part of the question but did not adequately answer the second part of the question which was equally as important as the first part." At Level 2, the students are not only given information about whether or not they were "right," or met the standard, but also about where and/or how they went wrong.

Level 3: Knowledge of Results + Identification of the Error + Discussion of the "Best" Answer

In addition to providing simple knowledge of results and a discussion of where and/or how the students went wrong, at Level 3 the instructor also provides information about what would constitute the "best" answer, and why that particular answer is seen as the "best" answer. For example, the instructor might say that, "Essays which received full credit included the following information... and the reason that information was important was because...." Thus, at Level 3, the instructor explains not only **what** the "best" answer is but **why** it is the best.

Level 4: Knowledge of Results + Identification of the Error + Discussion of the "Best" Answer + Discussion of Strategies to Avoid the Problem in the Future

Feedback at Level 4 would include information that was talked about in Levels 1 through 3 and would go on to include strategies that the students could use to avoid similar problems. For example, when discussing an essay question, some useful strategies for the students would be to: 1) underline key terms in the question; 2) look for signal words like "and" that indicate a two-part question; and/or 3) make an outline before writing an answer to the question. Thus, at Level 4, the feedback communicated to the students includes the information given at all other levels but also includes strategies that students could use to help themselves avoid similar problems.

When Is It Appropriate to Use Each of the Levels of Feedback?

Ideally, giving Level 4 feedback all of the time would be best. However, in the real world of post-secondary education, much of the instructor's decisions must be

made in light of the contextual constraints. The question then becomes: "How can I as an instructor best match the level of feedback I give to my students with their need for feedback in a particular situation, given the realistic constraints on my time and instructional resources?" The question of when and what level of feedback a student or a group of students needs seems to depend on a large number of factors. Because considering every variable that could affect these decisions is unreasonable, guidelines are needed to help make these decisions. These guidelines are based on four factors that have a large impact on the type of feedback that is optimal in a given instructional setting. These four factors include: 1) whether or not the students have given correct or incorrect answers; 2) the students' level of confidence in themselves as students and in the particular responses that they gave; 3) how much prior knowledge and/or experience the students have with this particular type of test or assessment method; and 4) how much prior knowledge and/or experience the students have with this particular topic area. Using these factors as criteria, we can begin to discuss when a particular level of feedback would be most appropriate or useful to students.

Level 1 feedback appears to be most useful when students have given a correct answer, feel confident about their answer, are familiar with this type of test or assessment method, and have a good background in the particular topic area. In this situation the students are correct, they thought they would be correct, they are familiar with this method of assessment, and because of their background knowledge they know why that particular answer was correct. In that situation, information about what the correct answer is and why it is correct would be somewhat redundant. In addition, because the students' answer was correct, there is nothing to diagnose; hence, you assume that the strategies they used were effective.

On the other hand, if the answers were wrong, but the students felt confident and had good prior knowledge of both this type of test and the content area, the students would need at least Level 3 and possibly Level 4 feedback. Level 3 feedback would be important because it would help the students to diagnose where they went wrong on this particular question, or type of question, as well as inform them of the correct answer. Then, depending on the nature of the problem, the teacher and student(s) could determine the need for a review of the strategies or discussion and practice with additional strategies.

If a student was not confident in her response, it would seem that being correct or incorrect would not negate the need for feedback beyond Level 1. Being correct but not confident would indicate some question in her mind that would necessitate at least Level 3 information about what was the correct answer and why. Thus, if she was correct, Level 3 feedback would help her to increase her confidence by giving her additional information about what was the best answer and why. Whereas if she was not confident and not correct, at least Level 2 and probably Level 4 feedback would be needed. This would be even more important if students did not have a lot of background knowledge in the particular topic area.

In terms of prior knowledge of assessment method or content area, the general rule of thumb would be the less prior knowledge and experience the students have, the more the need for Level 4 feedback. In addition, as the students' level of experience increases, the task of diagnosing problems and selecting future strategies should become more self-directed. Therefore, part of the instructor's task related to giving feedback is the transference of control of the diagnosis of problems, and the selection of future strategies, to the students themselves.

Summary

Test feedback is an important part of the teaching and learning process. It involves, among other things, collecting information about students' performance, their level of confidence in their performance, their familiarity with the type of test or assessment method, and their background knowledge. By taking this information into consideration, the instructor can determine what level of feedback would be most useful for their students on a particular test, topic, or question. This process can help the instructor to design and deliver appropriate feedback at an appropriate time which provides students with information and strategies needed to improve their academic performance on future tests, or other assessment measures.

Paul A. Schutz, *Assistant Professor, Educational Foundations*

Claire E. Weinstein, *Professor, Educational Psychology*

For further information, contact author Paul Schutz at the University of Arkansas, GEB 247, Fayetteville, AR 72701 or Claire E. Weinstein at The University of Texas at Austin, EDB 352, Austin, TX 78712.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

October 5, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 22
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 23

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

I Know It When I See It: Great Teaching

At Brookdale Community College we have produced a video series on teaching excellence. All of the videos incorporate actual classroom footage and an interview with the instructor explaining his/her techniques or strategies. Some examples follow.

♦♦♦♦

Solving World Problems

The demonstration performance method is used as a key strategy in teaching students how to solve problems in a math class. The instructor demonstrates and explains the techniques, then guides the students at the chalkboard in performing the skill. Students can be seen working and thinking through the process. The benefits of the demonstration method and the chalkboard as a supporting tool are featured.

Doubling

Teaching students to portray feelings and emotions are taught via the demonstration method. In Socio Drama, the instructor helps students to express inner feelings of a third party. The method takes on an unusual focus of learning an affective skill.

"Lost on the Moon"

The students, in small group discussion, are led through the simulation game "Lost on the Moon." Students are seen working in small groups in an attempt to problem solve for their survival on the moon. They are given a list of items to prioritize, and their survival is based on their score. An interview with the instructor clarifies her agenda for engaging students in a unique problem-solving process, as well as in the dynamics of gaming.

Teaching: The Art of Having Fun

This instructor allows his students to view English and French law via a new perspective. Situations of law are placed in a setting that forces the student to laugh and smile. The style of lecturing supports the theory that teaching and learning can be fun for students and instructor.

Enthusiasm in the Classroom

The Battle of Lexington and Concord is the lesson topic in this American Civilization history class. The student is given a vicarious experience of the battle via dramatization. Through the use of the chalkboard, storytelling, quotations, dramatic gestures, voice changes, and humor, the battle comes alive. During the interview the instructor uses the same charm and techniques to articulate the philosophy behind his approach.

Using Examples

The instructor is teaching Human Growth and Development; it is the first day of the semester, and the lesson topic is assimilation/accommodation. The concept involves how children learn and acquire new information. The instructor uses three forms of examples (communication) to teach the concept. The first illustration (enactive) is having the student physically learn a new (physical) skill. The second example (symbolic) has the student listening to how a young child reacts to different objects being rolled across the floor. The third example (iconic) has the student examining a spoon-like object in an attempt to classify its use. Footage is interspersed with comments from the instructor's interview: how examples are selected, their purpose, and their importance to students.

Role-Playing

Charlie Russell, a Western American artist (late 1800's/early 1900's), visits the classroom. The dialogue is a mixture of Charlie's quotations and stories told in his unique Western drawl. Humor and wit of the artist are threaded throughout the visit. Charlie is interviewed in costume and answers questions that reflect his views on role-playing as a teaching technique.

♦♦♦♦

In the literature there seems to be no consensus on what constitutes an excellent teacher, but we all know a great teacher when we see one. The dilemma is not recognizing excellence, but identifying its specific characteristics.

Frank Paoni, *Coordinator, Center for Educational Research*

For further information, contact the author at Brookdale Community College, Newman Springs Road, Lincroft, NJ 07738.

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD)
Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin
EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

A Pound of Prevention... Integration of Ethics Into Introductory Accounting

Pick up a current copy of any major newspaper or business publication and you will find articles about business leaders who stepped into the gray areas of ethical business practices and are now accused of mismanagement, deceit, or outright fraud. Continued media exposure has raised the level of concern about American business ethics, and colleges and universities are responding by adding ethics courses to their business school curricula.

All instructors can supplement and reinforce the formal courses by integrating ethics into their routine course content. Following are three approaches that have been effective in integrating ethics issues into my introductory accounting courses, promoting student interest and active participation.

♦♦♦♦

Current Events and "War Stories"

I introduce ethics during the second class meeting by asking the students where they got the pencil or pen they have in their hands. Without fail, about 75% of them will admit to having taken it from work without permission. This question generates a lively discussion on the degrees of right or wrong and the scope of ethical considerations. It is clear that ethics is not just a one-time, important business decision made by a high-level executive, but rather an accumulation of day-to-day, small-scale decisions made at all levels.

At the beginning of each subsequent class period, we spend five minutes discussing current business news articles or practices observed by students on the job. Management expense reports are a favorite topic and emphasize how difficult it is to draw the line between management discretion and unethical practices. Financial statement disclosures, asset management, inventory control, employee relations, and leadership issues all relate to ethics.

Case Studies

I allocate part of one class session per semester for case study discussions. I divide the class into groups of three to five students and give each group a preselected case study. The small group structure encourages a more open discussion about values and possible applications in the student's own work environment. I serve as facilitator to avoid influencing the group's analysis and assessment.

I do, however, pose general questions to get the discussion started and keep it focused. For example, one case study put the students in the role of a manager who found out through another employee that his best employee was stealing and selling bicycles for cash. I asked the groups to consider how they would detect or, better yet, prevent such an occurrence. I also asked if their decision might change if the employee had stolen just one bicycle and had given it to an impoverished child for Christmas.

I schedule 20 minutes for group discussion and 20 minutes for the groups to report and defend their conclusions. Students are encouraged to challenge other opinions.

Student Reports

My final strategy is to offer students an extra-credit option of preparing an in-depth written or oral report on a current news topic or a topic of their own choosing. I ask students to consider how the issues impact the business' relationship with its stockholders, employees, vendors, and customers; what aspects of the media coverage might have been biased and why; what corrective measures seem to be needed; and who should police the correction—the government, the industry, or the business itself.

Two students selected their own topics. One interviewed a whistleblower and reported on his personal devastation and near financial ruin. The other designed a 10-part ethics questionnaire for completion by her classmates. It was not a scientific study, but the results fostered a lively discussion.

♦♦♦♦

There are other ways to integrate ethics into business and non-business classes, but these methods worked well. The students did not walk away with a checklist of right and wrong behaviors, but with reference points for recognizing possible unethical acts and compromising situations. This exposure will help them understand the potential consequences of the decisions they make.

Bernadine McCollum, *Instructor, Accounting*

For further information, contact the author at Paradise Valley Community College, 18401 N. 32nd Street, Phoenix, AZ 85032.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

October 12, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 23
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 24

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

A Versatile and Fun Learning Experience: The Student Journal

Description and Objective

The most rewarding instructional technique I have found in a decade of community college teaching has been the student journal assignment. Each student maintains an ongoing account of his/her learning experiences relative to a topic or theme chosen to satisfy his/her own interests or curiosity. The broad objective of the journal assignment is to involve students in a variety of learning experiences which they can relate to those in the real world. The journals are evaluated subjectively for accuracy, thoroughness, originality, thoughtfulness, neatness, and compliance with the general ground rules. The journal experience is especially appropriate for the subjects I teach: World Politics, American National Government, and State and Local Government.

The Journal Project

In World Politics, each student is instructed to choose a nation from a list I provide, follow that nation's foreign policy experiences during the semester, and maintain an ongoing account of those experiences. In American National Government and State and Local Government, students similarly choose topics that are of interest to them, that are compatible with the themes I have selected, and that are timely enough to give them ample material with which to work.

Students are instructed to begin following the news and recording information relative to their topics in their journals immediately. They are instructed to make frequent journal entries and to avoid long periods of inactivity. The idea is for them *continually* to monitor the news and to record in their journals what they read, see, and hear. They should read the newspapers daily, look through the news magazines weekly, and pay continuous attention to radio and television newscasts. Their journal entries should come from a variety of sources, so they are encouraged to be on the alert for opportunities to gather information from books, scholarly publications, government documents, films, lectures, public events, personal contacts, etc.

The students alone decide what goes into their journals. This freedom can quickly cause consternation within students who have been unaccustomed to thinking for themselves. They are told that an *ongoing effort* is a condition for earning a good grade and that they should not have large time gaps between journal entries. As well, they are told that the *quality* of their entries is essential to earning a good grade.

Students quickly realize that they must do more than simply gather information. They realize that a journal with a few entries of high quality will earn them more points than a journal with more entries of superficial one-liners. They realize that they must think about what they read, see, and hear, and learn to recognize what information is significant. They must make value judgments. They must try to make sense out of the real world.

The students are instructed to summarize the information they decide to enter into their journals by putting it *into their own words*. Simply copying material from a printed source and using it as a journal entry is not permitted. However, they may use direct quotes, charts, graphs, and photographs when there is legitimate need for them. *All* journal entries must include the date of entry and complete source documentation. Students are given instructions for appropriately documenting information.

The students are encouraged to enter their own comments, criticisms, analyses, and conclusions. They are not to worry about being right or wrong. They are encouraged to record their thoughts as they develop and to continue to build upon them as the semester progresses. They are to narrow their effort along the way and focus on a particular problem or situation within their overall topic as their personal interests and/or real-world events lead them. This specialization will make their journals easier to handle and will enhance their interest in the topics.

The students are encouraged to search for background information that is relevant to their topics and include this information as journal entries. This im-

proves their general knowledge of the topics, which in turn enables them to better evaluate and assimilate the mass of new information they gather. It is suggested that if their topic should drop out of the news for a few days, they should use the time to search for additional background material.

Students are given a few take-home exercises during the semester which require them to relate textbook information to the characteristics and problems of their specific topics. These exercises become part of their journals, and the information learned is to be used in conjunction with the material they gather from real-world activities.

At the end of the semester, the students are instructed to conclude their journals with a summary statement. They are free to summarize their journal contents; provide lessons learned; offer personal opinions, conclusions, predictions; and raise questions.

Student Progress

It is absolutely essential that the instructor persistently and relentlessly monitor each student's progress *throughout the semester*. This begins by making certain that all students clearly understand the objectives and the ground rules of the assignment. Students need to know what standards of performance are expected, how the journal will be evaluated, and how much it will count toward their final grade. Students must be warned at the beginning of the semester that they cannot "cram" this project into the last few days of the semester, that "building" a journal at the last minute is unacceptable, and that such an attempt is easily detected and will result in lost points.

A few minutes of discussion during each class period can identify those who are keeping up with the task. If classes are small, the journals may be collected, reviewed, and returned with comments. If classes are large, written surveys may be taken periodically, asking students to report how many entries they have made, how many different sources they have used, or how many times they have entered personal comments to date. These surveys should then be returned to students with comments.

Another way to monitor progress is to divide the students into small groups and ask them to review all the journals within their respective groups and within the context of questions or criteria provided by the instructor. For example, the groups might be asked to determine the average number of entries within their group, identify the most unusual source of information, or identify the most original idea or method. Group leaders will guide each group's effort and report each group's findings to the class. Hearing the findings of all groups and reviewing other students' journals will enable each student to put his/her performance into perspective. Those who have been "slacking off" will realize that they should do better, and they will.

Finally, it is important that the instructor frequently offers to review any student's journal, one-on-one, in private, at a time convenient for both. Students who lack confidence or are naturally shy will often take advantage of this offer. Without an opportunity for private consultation, some students will let their fears overcome them and give up. A little personal attention will go a long way to encourage them, motivate them, and give them the confidence to do a superb job.

Rewards

What do the students get out of the journal assignment? Those who do it properly will have a number of learning experiences: writing, research, library use, observation skills, critical thinking, creative thinking, self-confidence, general knowledge, specialized knowledge, motivation to learn, enjoyment, and pride of accomplishment. These are the experiences and rewards that students have fed back to me in their closing statements, course critiques, or in casual conversation.

What are the instructor's rewards? *Gratification*—watching students come alive and get involved, not only in course material but in the real world to which that material applies. *Gratification*—hearing a student pop into the office unexpectedly and ask, "Have you heard what the East Germans did today?" Through the journal and the personal contact that inevitably accompanies it, the instructor realizes that each student is more than a name, more than a number, more than another grade. The instructor realizes that each student is a thinking, creative, sensitive, unique human being.

Wilbert G. Hols, *Instructor, Political Science*

For further information, contact the author at Jefferson Community College (Southwest), 1000 Community College Drive, Louisville, KY 40272.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

October 19, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 24
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990. Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 25

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Building Community Through Research Projects

Our new interdisciplinary honors course, "Quest for World Community," was approved as a world literature class and scheduled for launch in the fall of 1989. As the instructional team we were enthusiastic, experienced instructors, but none of us were experts in the vast field of global literature. That summer, after only a few brainstorming sessions to create a syllabus for the course, we recognized the scope of the research we faced. Through our preliminary search to develop a syllabus for the class, we realized that the process of research would afford an invaluable experience for the students and result in one of the liveliest, most stimulating courses any of us had ever taught.

We discovered that, when given the challenge of working in small research groups in order to develop a reading list for the last two-thirds of the course, students accomplished a complex research assignment with genuine outcomes, gained first-hand experience in community building (the theme of the class), and invested intellectually and emotionally in the course of their own creation. Motivation and performance soared. What follows is an account of what strategy we used, along with observations of how this approach might be adapted to any course.

In order to build the foundation for a successful small group research project, we decided to set aside the first week of the semester for getting to know one another through name games and introductions. Students were asked to share their first thoughts, prejudices, and preconceptions about world community. We also administered the Kolb learning style assessment, a simple instrument around which we based some small group activities and which helped us to recognize and celebrate the diversity within our own class. These familiarity exercises paved the way for the second week, during which we introduced the research assignment. Assuming that our enrollment would be around 20 students, we divided the globe into six rather arbitrary geographical areas. This would ensure geographical diversity, even if some areas would include several major cultures. We settled on six areas so that research groups would be no larger than four, and more likely three, students, fearing that larger groups would present difficulties in coordination. Also, larger groups might encourage some students to slither from the limelight of accountability. (This might be overcome by more specific accountability procedures established by the instructor.)

At the beginning of week two, we laid out six placards on the floor around the room. On each placard was the name of a continent or geographical region: Central and South America there, Africa here, Asia over in the corner, Eastern Europe there, and so on. We issued simple instructions: "Divide yourselves into groups of at least three and sign your names to the placards of your choice." Then we left the room. In five minutes the groups were born. Two students were unable to get their first choices, so this procedure launched the process of compromise and conflict resolution—two important community-building skills. [We recognize that group division could have been accomplished with more deliberate control by instructors. We might have used the Kolb instrument or the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory. Instead, we opted for student choice.]

Once the research groups were formed, we distributed a handout that stated the objectives, criteria, strategies, and expected outcomes of the assignment. We explained that the reading for the first four weeks of the course was developed by the faculty team, using the same guidelines spelled out for them on the handout. [We might mention that the faculty team was offered as a model for research groups.] Our selections were diverse, including a novel, a play, a short story, a speech, and two films—all addressed or related to the theme of the course. Each was a work that offered insight into a particular culture by a native of that culture. They were readily available, were of readable length (we intentionally left this vague), and were deemed significant works of literature by knowledgeable commentators on the art of that culture. We expected their choices to reflect the same six criteria.

Each research group was responsible for offering three selections of literature and/or film from its chosen region for consideration by the class. These three

works, along with arguments and evidence supporting their selections, were to be presented to the class orally in the fifth week of the semester. We limited presentations to 15 minutes each and suggested that students consider their presentations as persuasive speeches. In addition to the oral presentation, we required each student to maintain a research log: "a detailed but readable account of how the research proceeded, who completed what tasks, what discoveries and frustrations were experienced, and how final decisions were made." We required that it also include documentation of works cited and people interviewed.

Over the next two weeks we allowed the groups a few minutes of class time to meet and organize. The students assumed responsibility for most of the meetings on their own time outside of class. We also arranged two "potluck" dinners for the class on weekends in order to view films we had chosen and, more importantly, to give students a chance to relax and get to know one another. Even these informal occasions were used by the research groups to swap ideas, discoveries, and frustrations.

At this point, we realized a hidden virtue of this kind of research project. The students were building relationships and community even as they worked on a demanding academic task. Further, the groups all faced conflicts and frustrations, not only with the immensity of their tasks, but with each other as well. There was a struggle and compromise. Some groups functioned more smoothly than others. A couple of groups didn't function at all; members worked independently, perplexed by the seeming impossibility of meeting regularly in the face of busy lives and overbooked personal schedules. Most of these conflicts found voice in the research logs, and we learned of them only after the projects were completed. Even then the experience of struggle became rich experiential compost for the community garden. But the most exciting outcome of this research assignment was not to reveal itself until later, and it took us by pleasant surprise.

On the day research results were presented, the students bristled with excitement. Fifteen minutes proved much too short to contain the information each group eagerly offered the class. These were *their* selections, and the students resembled dedicated instructors expounding the virtues and significance of their selections. Supporting evidence sometimes spilled over into personal anecdotes of interesting people interviewed and surprises experienced. In the two class periods we devoted to the presentations, a major shift occurred: The mantle of responsibility and the authority for the class was lifted from the shoulders of the instructors and settled comfortably onto the shoulders of the students.

For the next 10 weeks this was their course, and they knew it. Nobody said it, we didn't plan it, but there it was. We shared the students' enthusiasm. Thanks to their efforts, we all looked forward to a reading list that was fresh to us all. Our job at this point was to narrow the readings to a manageable number and to place the readings into some kind of sensible order, allowing for length of selections and dates when we could obtain some of the materials. Co-learning would be a reality.

And so it was. We read and pondered these works alongside the students. We read works chosen by a particular group; members of that group would volunteer background information and help us over humps in understanding. As instructors we felt the kind of investment they had in the readings; we experienced it every time we walked into a classroom. For most, if not all, of the students, it was their first taste of really caring deeply about their academic work.

❦❦❦❦❦

Many of the outcomes of this student-centered research project, intended and otherwise, met the thematic concerns of our course by converting the class itself into a microcosmic community. The pedagogy underlying it, however, invites adaptability to most other courses, in short, by structuring assignments and activities in ways which: engage students and help to build community in the classroom, reward students for working collaboratively, develop in students feelings of responsibility for and caring about the assignments, and help faculty and students become active co-learners in the classroom. We believe such an approach enables students to participate genuinely in the process and content of their learning and offers some means of bringing the students' minds and spirits into our classrooms.

Luke Barber, *Professor, English/Philosophy*

John Barrett, *Professor, English*

Jackie Claunch, *Dean of Instruction*

For further information, contact the authors at Richland College, 12800 Abrams Road, Dallas, TX 75243-2199.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

October 26, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 25
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 26

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Distinguished Teachers Receive Support for Special Projects

As the coordinator of faculty development at Columbus State Community College, I coordinate the Distinguished Teaching Award program. We annually honor as many as four distinguished teachers, primarily student-nominated. They are awarded $1000, a framed certificate, and a medallion. They are offered the opportunity of attending a teaching excellence conference, such as NISOD or a Great Teacher Seminar. In return, we ask them to help select the next year's award recipients (by performing classroom observations) and to consult with other faculty upon request. And, unique to our college, these Distinguished Teachers may conduct a project that is of interest to them and serves the entire college.

In the past three years, Distinguished Teacher projects have included training and assistance in writing computer simulations; researching "questioning that promotes critical thinking" and conducting a faculty workshop; observing classes to determine factors affecting collaborative learning; developing and coordinating a voluntary faculty mentoring program; developing a faculty advising manual; and conducting classroom research.

In addition to the obvious benefits of such projects to the college, the faculty who complete them have been energized and revitalized. They have made collegial contacts that otherwise would not have been made and have gained many new perspectives from those teaching in different subject areas and divisions. One of our Distinguished Teachers describes her project.

Investigating Teaching Styles

Determining a focus for my Distinguished Teaching project proved to be easier than I had expected. For a long time, I had recognized a personal need to know more about other departments and divisions at Columbus State in the areas of teaching styles, effective learning settings, and both "old" and "new" ideas for working with students. The college encouraged me to develop this need (and curiosity) into a project which allowed me to make classroom observations in every academic department on campus over a period of four months during the spring and summer quarters, 1989.

First, the purpose and rationale for the project was communicated to faculty and chairpersons within the 22 departments on campus. I included the following information in a memo:

1. The primary purpose of this project is to develop and facilitate cross-campus awareness of teaching techniques among faculty. It is my perception that faculty in different divisions (and, to some extent, within divisions) are not sharing their teaching expertise and experiences.
2. A second purpose is to generate a list of faculty and the teaching technique(s) they utilize which can be used as a resource guide by others. I know that we have excellent educators at Columbus State, but I think we fail to access the available in-house resources.
3. An additional purpose is to create a mechanism for "tooting the horn" of our faculty, who are actively trying new ways of challenging students, continually updating and refining existing skills and techniques. *Everyone* wants to be recognized. This project attempts to create an additional channel for such recognition and attention.

In addition, I felt it important that fellow faculty members be secure with my presence in their classrooms and not feel pressured by the observations. Therefore, the memo also specified the following:

1. I will consider the observations a privilege granted by one faculty member to another. There will be *no* attempt to evaluate or judge any of the faculty members observed.
2. My preference is that faculty members volunteer to be observed and choose the class session to be observed.
3. I am also willing to talk with other faculty about techniques and methods which cannot be observed directly. Although I would strongly prefer to see faculty in action, I am aware that this may not be possible in all cases.

I received responses from departments in each of the four divisions at Columbus State, and 16 volunteer faculty members were contacted to arrange observational visits. The opportunity proved as informative as I had hoped and identified a multitude of ideas for future use. As expected, faculty were teaching both traditionally and nontraditionally, with flexibility as well as with structure; and each brought his or her own unique characteristics to the delivery of material. Within each classroom I was able to identify an overall atmosphere which was created in part by the teacher and in part by the response and participation of the students.

In one session within the Basic Science Department, I was impressed with the instructor's immediate involvement of the students in the learning process. After asking them about their understanding of the concepts covered in the previous class, she followed with questions which allowed for positive responses and then praised them for their recall and completion of an informal homework experiment. Analogies and examples from her own life let students visualize difficult concepts, and I found the description comparing molecules of water to "a bucket of BB's" helpful. Study tricks and shortcuts, such as key word associations, were identified by this instructor and recommended to students on a regular basis. When asked what they liked about the instructor's teaching, students mentioned the study tricks and stated, "She's enthusiastic! She comes in and says, 'This is going to be fun!' She likes what she's doing." The student response mirrored the teacher's behavior.

It is a difficult task to teach students who, years ago, may have "turned off and tuned out" writing as an effective form of communication. Within the Communication Skills Department, students are given a variety of ways to learn and demonstrate their comprehension, refinement, and sometimes relearning of the subject. In addition to creating their own compositions in a clear and concise manner, students are asked to keep a journal. The journal topics are structured for the student by the instructor and relate to the student's feeling about writing. As the faculty member reads the journal, he or she is able to provide individualized instruction to the student, based on his or her own identification of need. Group work is utilized during brainstorming half-hours in class where students work together to pinpoint and clarify composition topics, and through the technique of reviewing first drafts in class and critiquing the work of fellow classmates. Once again, interest is piqued by the use of "grabbers" on the board: How would *you* punctuate the sentence used by this instructor, "That that is is that that is not is not is it it is"?

Those of us who think that the teaching technique of asking "What's wrong with this picture?" is only for elementary children should take another look. I visited one classroom where using this technique brought the student participation to life and the discussion and interaction between teacher and students to a higher level. As the Electronics Engineering Technology faculty member drew on the board an example of a series-parallel circuit, he failed to design the circuit correctly and stepped back for a long moment to study his diagram. The instructor indicated to me later that this mistake was not intentional and that his hesitancy was real as he processed the correct response. The unplanned reaction from students (who had been previously silent, listening to a lecture) was the exciting part. Students became actively involved in working together to solve the problem. They suggested possibilities, gave critical feedback to one another, and clearly indicated to the teacher by their comments what they were knowledgeable about and what content areas still needed work. The atmosphere created by this event was one of respect for both student and teacher, and the partnership which is possible was very apparent.

I have incorporated many of these ideas into my own teaching in the field of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Though our subject matter is diverse, we have much to teach each other. The opportunity and privilege of exploring this subject continues to be invaluable to me.

Marilyn Pramschufer
Associate Professor
Mental Health/Mental Retardation

❦❦❦❦❦

Sheri Bidwell, *Assistant to Vice President for Academic Affairs*

For further information, contact the author at Columbus State Community College, 550 East Spring Street, P.O. Box 1609, Columbus, OH 43216-1609.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

November 2, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 26
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 27

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Creating Community in the Community College Classroom... or, It's Okay to Break the Silence

Almost every community college instructor has experienced the uncomfortable sound of silence that occurs on opening day each semester as students enter the classroom and quietly, warily take their seats, watching and waiting. As instructors we tend to stand at the door and cheerfully greet each student, or calmly wait behind the podium pretending to concentrate on a last-minute paper shuffle, or enthusiastically hurry into the classroom after all the students have found seats. Regardless of how we begin, silence and an accompanying sense of distance persist.

At this moment the "community" in community college becomes a misnomer. Unlike four-year residential colleges where a sense of community among students develops as a result of dorm life, social clubs, varsity sports, or Greek organizations, rarely is there a ready-made community for community college students unless the instructor takes time to create one. Creating a community within the classroom begins when students interact with other students in such a way that connections begin to form.

Ice breakers and warm-up activities encourage the building of a classroom community. Instructors discover that ice breakers not only help students get to know and like each other, but such connections reduce attrition, involve students in their own learning, and improve classroom discussion and interaction.

What follows is a series of ice breakers that work. Some are more practical for small discussion groups; others work better in large lecture settings. Some can be accomplished in three to five minutes; others require more time. All are classroom-tested by successful community college instructors.

Paired Interviews

For this ice breaker, allow five minutes total interview time and, depending on group size and time constraints, 15 to 60 seconds reporting time per person.

- Pair students quickly (if one student remains, you act as his/her partner until a latecomer arrives).
- Ask students to interview each other. For the first two minutes, one partner is the interviewer; when you call "time" after two minutes, the partners switch roles.
- The interview can be structured; you can give suggestions or specific questions to ask: Name? Where did you grow up? What is your favorite leisure-time activity? Why are you taking this course?
- At the end of the four minutes of interview time, begin the reporting back phase, indicating to the students how much time each should spend introducing his or her partner. Model the activity by reporting first.

Students enjoy learning about each other and about you; they reveal more information about each other than they would if asked to introduce themselves. This activity also provides an excellent way for you to begin learning students' names. As students introduce each other, jot down names and make an impromptu, informal seating chart. Then, for the remainder of the class period, you can call students by name.

Index Card—You Tell Me, I'll Tell You

This ice breaker takes little time and works well for any size group. It serves to help you gain rapport with students.

- Distribute two index cards to each person, making certain the cards are different (i.e., color, size, lined/unlined).
- Ask the students to use one card (specify which) to tell you anything they want you to know about them as individuals. It can be specific to the class or just to them. Indicate that you would like the student's name on the card and that you consider this card confidential. (You will be surprised at the candor students exhibit. Students have written such comments as: "Please don't call on me to read out loud"; "I've always done badly in math, and I'm afraid I'll fail this class.")
- Collect these cards while students are completing the second set.
- On the second set, ask students to write a question about you or the course. Indicate no names are necessary and that you'll answer the questions.

- After you collect the second set, thumb through the cards, answering those you can on the spot. You might take the last few minutes of class to answer others.

During the next few class sessions, try to answer all the questions. Your candor will help students feel comfortable with you and the course.

Great Questions

This ice breaker works well with small or large groups, and the time it takes is easily controlled by the instructor.

- Begin by deciding (before class) on three questions you'd like students to ask each other and then discuss as a class. They may be generic or discipline-specific, but should be open-ended and have the potential of a wide variety of answers. Examples of questions are: If you could change one thing in today's world, what would it be? What do you like best about (your college)? What do you want to be doing in five years? What frustrates you most about...? Which president has had the greatest impact on our country? Why do people have math anxiety?
- Once you've selected three questions, put them on the board or project them on a screen. There will be two rounds of questions.
- In the first round, ask the students to move around the room, find someone they don't know, ask him/her the questions, and jot down the responses.
- In the second round, ask students to move to another person. Each student's responses to the questions should be different from those given during the first round, forcing students to stretch their thinking.

After a few minutes, halt the "interview exchange" and have students return to their seats. As a class, discuss the responses to the questions.

Organized Sit-Downs

This activity can serve as an introduction to a topic or general theme of the course.

- Once students are seated, ask them to re-seat themselves according to whatever "theme" you've chosen. For example, a U.S. History class might be asked to seat themselves in the rough shape of the United States based on where they were born.
- Indicate general areas of the room, such as "down front is Mexico and South America, to the right California and Pacific areas." But, since one of the objectives is to get students to make contact with each other, it is wise to let them sort out the details.
- Once everyone has found a seat, you might follow up with some appropriate questions: How many of you are native New Yorkers? Michiganders? Or, in the case of the math class, you might talk about average height, frequency, or range.

Whatever the theme of the organized sit-downs, encourage students to introduce themselves to each other. Place yourself in the appropriate seat.

Find a Person Who...

This simple activity is easily tailored to different classes and updated each semester.

- Prior to the first class meeting, write 10-15 statements on a sheet of paper with a blank space after each. Make a copy for each student.
- Title the paper "Find a Person Who...." Sentences vary from personal information to discipline/course information, such as: Find a person who is left-handed, is on this campus for the first time, likes to snow ski, is a native of California, jogs/walks 15 miles or more each week, is working towards an A.A. degree.
- Distribute the papers and encourage students to mill around the room asking questions of each other. A person who fits the statement signs his/her name on the appropriate blank. A person can sign only once on each sheet of paper.
- When it appears that many have completed the exercise, call time; have students return to their seats, and as a class discuss the responses to the questions: "Who is left handed?" "Do we have any native Californians here?"

If you complete this exercise just prior to a break, you'll find increased conversation between students which carries over during this free time.

By breaking the silence that accompanies every first class, you are encouraging community. And when students risk—just a little by sharing something about themselves—you are building a basis for open discussions later in the course. Consider using ice-breaker activities periodically, not just on the first day, to help students form new connections and build more diverse communities.

Sharalee C. Jorgensen, *Dean, Community Education*

For further information, contact the author at Mira-Costa College, One Barnard Drive, Oceanside, CA 92056.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

November 9, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 27
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 28

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Reading Aloud

Freshman composition courses abound with supplementary readers and essay compendiums which, ideally, are sample modes of development for neophyte writers to follow. Consequently, composition teachers admonish their students to read more if they want to write better. I am no exception. But no amount of threats, warnings, and tirades ensure that my students will do the reading necessary to improve their writing, especially since lecture preparation, essay production, and then grading and error review seem to take up so much time both in and out of class. Pop quizzes and in-class tests never seem to succeed at getting the students to utilize their readings and instead only seem to show them how to pass the quickie tests. Furthermore, I, along with my colleagues, realize we are dealing with the products of a quarter of a century of electronic media pushers. Nothing seems to get students to do the comprehensive and thorough reading necessary to understand the intimate relationship between organized thought and its translation onto the printed page.

I urgently want my students not only to get the most out of their reading assignments, but to know how to unlock the subtleties, allusions, metaphors, and historical references present in good expository writing. Out of desperation, I resorted to the old primary school standby—reading aloud in class.

My first goal is simply to get students to read aloud samples of their assigned essay examples for development and style. But secretly I longed for them to appreciate the aural beauty of the well-written word. Early in the term I set aside 4 to 6 one-hour class sessions in which we can thoroughly read and discuss each essay. Fortunately, composition classes at Edison are limited to a maximum of 20 students. I divide the class into three groups and assign each essay that can be adequately read in no more than two 50- to 55-minute class periods. I try to pick the most vividly exciting or interesting selections or one that is loaded with adjectives or perhaps controversial issues. The essay contains enough material so that each group member has at least 8 to 10 minutes of uninterrupted performance time. I require that each group member read aloud and that all unfamiliar vocabulary within the selection be defined prior to presentation. I assign three short-answer summary-type questions following the selection which are to be answered jointly and then presented by a designated speaker who may or may not read the answers.

Hesitant and shy at first, by the second session the students are itching to perform before their peers. As we progress, students start to gain confidence and stop each other (and me) to ask for definitions and clarifications. Throughout all sessions I encourage them to leave their fragile egos at the classroom door, and I constantly assure them that we are all learning to be better readers, which hopefully will continue throughout our lives. And while I will sometimes let a skipped line or mispronunciation pass unnoticed and force myself to bite my tongue while students struggle with sentence structure and vocabulary, I find students quickly correct each other and insist that the slightest mistake not pass uncorrected.

By the end of the last group's presentation, the class has not only become more relaxed and confident with each other, but almost all see reading in a new, more scholarly light—not as some dreaded assigned exercise—but as something alive, informative, and quite possibly fun. The in-class exercise gives me a welcome respite from the daily grind of lecture preparation and background reading, but more importantly, it gives me excellent insight into certain students' learning disabilities or reading problems. I can more confidently recommend that these students get tutors or extra lab assistance.

Most rewarding is the immediate effect that reading aloud has on students' essays. Their writing improves dramatically after this class exercise, especially with regard to content and style. While reading aloud is certainly not a cure-all for mechanical and grammatical faults, it certainly allows the students to practically see that reading is indeed useful and necessary to progress in the real world.

Virginia Harper-Phaneuf, *Instructor, Humanities*

For further information, contact the author at Edison Community College, College Parkway, Fort Myers, FL 33907.

Literary Still Lifes

For the past four years, the director of our art gallery has been supplementing the literary learning environment in our building with a series of unusual visual displays. Using freestanding showcases of various sizes and shapes, and in one instance an entire section of brick wall from floor to ceiling, he combines artifacts relevant to various literary excerpts by juxtaposing the objects with texts printed in large type on pieces of white foam-core board.

Each display features a specific author or a period or movement in literature. They have ranged in composition from the brick wall faced with barn siding to which were attached farm implements and farm administration photographs of rural scenes from the 1930's interspersed with selections from Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, to a single-pedestal, hexagonal showcase containing an old Mason jar resting on a swatch of red satin sprinkled with a few brown leaves, and an enlarged reprint of Wallace Stevens' poem "Anecdote of the Jar." One of the most striking of these literary still lifes comprised an array of technical hardware—springs, coils of wire, large bolts, a polished camshaft—strewn over a stark landscape with excerpts from the science fiction of Stanislaw Lem on white foam-core placards suspended in a staggered pattern from the ceiling of the lighted, cylindrical case.

An unexpectedly controversial display was a "Ken and Barbie" tableau that was intended to publicize a course on women in literature. Surrounded by a sea of tiny doll hands thrusting up from a bed of white sand, a bikinied "Barbie" rode on a surf raft towed by "Ken," with a golden chain, harness-fashion, around his neck. In the center was a piece of mirror glass, partially buried, in which the viewer could catch his own reflection as he read a copy of Sylvia Plath's poem "Mirror."

A recent effort, timed to coincide with "Earth Week," consisted of fossilized trilobites, sharks' teeth, and Eocene fish on a raked surface surrounded by copies in large type of James Dickey's "Last Wolverine," O.W. Holmes' "Chambered Nautilus," Robinson Jeffers' "Birds and Fishes," and Robert Lowell's "The Mouth of the Hudson."

In addition to transforming the hallways and lobbies of our building into some of the most visually interesting venues on campus, these displays have had a profound impact on students and visitors who regularly stop to peruse them. In many instances, they provide viewers with their first contact with a poet, or novelist, or a literary movement. In others, they supplement what was or is being studied in classes, provoking fresh insights by bringing featured works to life with new perspectives. It is also worth noting that the fine arts and literature faculties in Essex have been drawn into a greater collegiality, enriching the curricula in both areas.

These "payoffs" are difficult to measure, but they are nonetheless real and should make the technique worth a try. Besides, it offers a welcome alternative to dreary old bulletin boards!

W. P. Ellis, *Chairman, Division of Humanities & Arts*

For further information, contact the author at Essex Community College, 7201 Rossville Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21237.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

November 16, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 28
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 29

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

A Writing Assignment for the Tech Classroom

When I first started teaching in the technologies after more than a decade in the humanities, I was worried that there would be little opportunity for writing assignments. I felt that my computer students should be doing more writing than responding to the occasional short-answer questions on tests. Thanks to the efforts of our local WAC (Writing Across the Curriculum) group, I've discovered that writing assignments can have an important place in the technology curriculum. Now, I use a variety of writing activities in my tech classes.

❖❖❖❖❖

One simple exercise has worked particularly well. I tell my students to read an assigned chapter and then write five questions based on their reading. However, these questions must not be questions that the text answers; rather, they should be questions that someone who has read the chapter carefully might not be able to answer from having completed the reading assignment only.

I also give the students examples of appropriate and inappropriate questions. For instance, if the chapter is on programming languages, a poor question would be: "What are the names of the major computer languages?" This would be a poor question because the book provides the answers. A better question would be, "Why are there so many different programming languages?"—a topic not directly addressed by the book.

No matter how well I explain the assignment the first time I give it, typically over half of the initial group of questions are simple factual questions, and the answers are obvious from a simple reading. *The students, it appears, are not accustomed to questioning what they read.* But with encouragement they are soon producing questions that are thoughtful and provocative. Some questions students asked after reading one chapter last semester were: "In foreign countries do they use BASIC and COBOL as we do, or do they need their own programming languages?" "How is Apple BASIC different from IBM BASIC?"

I admit I first devised this assignment out of desperation. Too many students were coming to class without having completed the assigned reading. This exercise not only serves as a check that students have read the material in advance of the discussion, but it also helps ensure that they have read it carefully. Moreover, their questions alert me to what might be problem areas in the reading for the day.

I unabashedly steal as many of the students' questions as I can and use them during class. As a result, discussions have become much more interesting, with many more students participating spontaneously. I closed last semester by discussing for an entire hour one student's question: "On the whole, will computers do more harm to society or more good?" This controversial question led to one of the rowdiest yet most informative discussions I've ever had the pleasure to lead.

The student who wrote that question was being an active reader; instead of passively taking for granted everything the text said, she talked back to the book by asking a question to which neither she nor I have the answer.

❖❖❖❖❖

It's said that an educated person is one who knows what questions to ask. Writing Across the Curriculum has inspired me to get my tech students to ask the tough questions—and to put them in writing.

Dennis Lynch, *Chair, Electronic Data Processing Department*

For further information, contact the author at Elgin Community College, 1700 Spartan Drive, Elgin, IL, 60123.

Philosophy in a New Key (With Bells and Whistles)

In my Introduction to Philosophy course, I use a "problems approach," discussing such perennial issues as ultimate reality, free will, knowledge, morality, political obligation, and the existence of God. In so doing, I have always treated philosophers without regard to any historical sequence of their lives or works. Even though I may have mentioned that Descartes lived in the seventeenth century or that Socrates died in 399 B.C., I found students had no concept of what these times were like. I decided to attempt a solution to this problem.

I reproduced 12" x 17" photographs of various philosophers. As I discussed a particular thinker, I put the photograph on an easel in the front of the room. I reproduced some great paintings of philosophers—Chartran's *Descartes in the Streets of Paris*, Jacque David's *The Death of Socrates*, and Rembrandt's *Aristotle With a Bust of Homer*. But, more frequently, I have used photographs of contemporary thinkers, such as Russell, Wittgenstein, and Sartre; pictures of busts and statues of the ancients; and photographs of paintings of philosophers who lived before the invention of photography.

In addition, before and after the class, I play music of the period from which that particular day's philosopher came. The intricate logic of Leibniz is communicated well by a Bach fugue; John Cage captures well the disjointed, absurd, God-abandoned world Sartre described. Mozart captures the spirit of Kantian formalism; and Strauss, in his *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, makes a fine musical focus for a discussion of Nietzsche. When discussing out-and-out egoistic hedonism, a picture of a bust of Aristippus is before me and a copy of *Playboy* magazine is in my hand, and I play Janis Joplin's "Lord, Won't You Buy Me a Mercedes Benz?" Country-and-western singer Gene Watson's "14 Carat Mind" provides a fine entree to a discussion of J. S. Mill's notion of qualitative differences in pleasures.

Philosophy students, quite on their own, came to see similarities between the philosophy being discussed and the costumes and hair styles of the pictured philosopher. They commented on how similar the pictures of Descartes and Leibniz were and how different they were from the pictures of Berkeley and Hume. Thus, grouping philosophers became easier for the students, as they saw the similarities and differences in the photographs. I sometimes used other sorts of pictures. For example, students can see similarities between Cartesian philosophy and the precisely-trimmed hedges of Versailles or between a Miro painting and the philosophy, say, of Albert Camus.

The music and photographs set the tone for the day's lecture and allow the students to participate noncognitively in the Zeitgeist. Students are very responsive to the pictures and music and like to speculate about what will be said in that day's discussion and lecture. At first, I was afraid that a picture of the bust of one Greek philosopher would look to the students very much like all other pictures of busts of Greek philosophers. But, in fact, many students were able to distinguish, on their own and without invitation or prompting, pictures of the bust of Aristotle from that of Plato and that of Socrates.

On occasion, a few minutes before class began, I would place the easel with the photograph outside the classroom. With the door open and the music playing, we often drew quite a crowd of the curious. Several students who were not enrolled in the class often would decide to visit for that day, just to see what was going on. These students added a new dimension to class discussion, and the strategy proved to be an excellent recruitment device for philosophy classes.

In addition to the music and photographs (a collection which has grown with numerous student contributions), I have insisted on the immediate availability of maps. I find my students are quite geographically illiterate. When I mention Socrates' Athens or Kant's Königsberg or Hegel's Vienna, I point to that city on a map in a very casual and offhand way, but the pointing seemed to increase the students' geographical awareness.

It is my belief that philosophy may be learned other than through reason. It is also my belief that to gain full appreciation of a philosophy, students must have some sense of the time and place of its development. Through the bells and whistles—the pictures, music, and maps—I have played my philosophic tunes in a new key this year. It was a key which, hopefully, expanded students' historical, aesthetic, geographic, as well as philosophic, horizons.

Robert Bennett, *Instructor, Philosophy*

For further information, contact the author at El Centro College, Main and Lamar, Dallas, TX 75202.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

November 30, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 29
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 30

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Ethics in Higher Education

In many academic institutions these days, the three "R's" are recruitment, retention, and revenue. At Brookdale Community College we have been giving some attention to the fourth "R," responsibility. In May 1989, I was charged with organizing a series of seminars on moral concerns at the college. The process by which the seminars were constructed and the outcomes they generated are worthy of discussion.

❦❦❦❦❦

The first step consisted of an appeal sent to the entire college community asking for input regarding specific ethical concerns. Individuals were invited to remain anonymous and to formulate their concerns as mini case studies in which the names and nonessential details were changed to disguise the living. To my surprise, only 19 responses were received from a total of 200 appeals. However, the high quality of these responses more than offset the lack of quantity. Several respondents sent lengthy memos; many offered multiple situations for consideration.

The next step was to organize these responses and to rewrite them for stylistic consistency. I arranged the suggestions into five sets: student issues, faculty issues, issues involving learning assistants, union issues, and administrative issues. Each set of issues contained four or five mini case studies for discussion.

Since the first two sets seemed to be of more general interest, we agreed to repeat the discussion of these issues several times. The last three sets were scheduled once each. Nine discussions were planned in three sequences: one sequence for the Monday lunch hour, a second for Tuesday evenings, and a third for Friday afternoons.

Another bulletin was sent to the college community advertising the sessions under the title of "Ethics in Higher Education." Interested personnel were encouraged to register for one sequence of three discussions, and they could join either as participants or spectators. This time the response improved: 36 faculty, staff, and administrators registered. Of these, 19 volunteered to participate; 17 preferred to simply observe. Because there was a strong preference for the lunch hour, the Tuesday evening sessions were cancelled, and a second sequence was scheduled for another set of Mondays.

Each of the participants was sent a copy of the "script" of case studies for his/her sequence. The basic discussion model was that used on the TV series "Ethics in America," in which I took the role of a principal character and the participants took other roles.

In the first discussion, for example, I played the role of a student, and participants played various faculty members. As Uriah Unready, I struggled with a math course for which I was ill-prepared, and the faculty member was challenged to decide how far he/she would extend his/her moral responsibility to remain patient and available for extra help. Later I became Jack Jocco, who showed no interest in a philosophy course, only to learn toward the end of the term that he desperately needed the credit for an athletic scholarship. Finally, I became Linda Lovelorn and encouraged a relationship with my accounting teacher as I continually sought extra help after my evening class.

Similar kinds of artificial—yet real—situations were used for discussions on administrative, faculty, learning assistant, and union issues. No attempts were made to find the "right" answers, but in many cases the participants came up with a set of tentative guidelines to distinguish morally acceptable from morally unacceptable behavior.

It is important that ethical discussion be based upon issues that are of genuine interest at any given time on campus. It is difficult to get people to submit issues about which discussions could be organized, but offering the college community the opportunity to submit them democratizes the process and removes suspicions of a hidden administrative agenda. Had we received fewer responses, I was prepared to "beat the bushes" for help from my immediate colleagues.

The use of case studies was, in retrospect, also a good choice. Frequently, in the discussion, it became obvious to many participants that the issue being discussed hypothetically had been, or still was, an actual situation on campus. Nevertheless, personalities were removed by focusing on the "case" and leaving the actual situation aside. So, even those who knew the details and had opinions about the latter were on equal footing with those who did not.

My role quickly became a bit complex. In one capacity, I functioned as leader of the discussion, keeping it on track, and moving it along to its conclusion. In a second, I was one of the participants assigned a specific role, usually as a protagonist for the ethically questionable position. In still a third, I was summarizer and chief formulator of principles—a role that fell to me probably because of my training in ethics and experience in classroom case study discussions. However, I found it easy to move back and forth among these three functions, and the other participants never seemed to have trouble with my shifting around.

Participants, as well, found the role-playing effective. It gave them the flexibility to step in and out of their roles, sometimes speaking their own minds and sometimes cushioning their opinions by making them come out of their roles. In this way, participants were able to disagree and yet not invest their true personae in the disagreement. When they left their roles, they could resume their friendships.

After the nine discussions were completed, an evaluation form was sent to all participants and spectators. Approximately one-half responded, and their approval of the method and the content of the series was unanimous.

❦❦❦❦❦

Did anyone learn anything from the sessions? Were opinions changed and were behaviors modified? The post-seminar evaluations didn't reveal anything so dramatic. But it was clear in many of the discussions that arguments presented in the roles that some participants played were frequently refuted and isolated from the general principles of morality that the group formulated at the end of each discussion period. That these opinions might have represented the actual thinking of the presenters must have given these participants cause to rethink their positions.

The fact that all participants thought that the discussions were worth the time of attendance indicates that some important personal thinking must have been occurring and that participants and spectators were probably relating the issues and principles to specific responsibilities they have in the college community. In other words, the fourth "R" got its day.

Robert B. Mellert, *Professor, Philosophy*

For further information, contact the author at Brookdale Community College, Newman Springs Road, Lincroft, NJ 07738.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

December 7, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 30
©The University of Texas at Austin, 1990
Further duplication is permitted by MEMBER institutions for their own personnel.

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for $40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges JAN 18 1991